

Journal Clubs

Help with getting started

Struggling to keep current and use evidence-based practice? You're not alone! Journal clubs can be an informal and practical way to learn how to appraise articles and gather evidence to inform practice. Here are some tips to run one successfully.

Meet regularly

Make your journal club a regular, anticipated event on everyone's calendar.

Include food

Let's face it, who doesn't prefer a meeting with food? Even lollies or chips will do. Journal club meetings should be social and enjoyable.

Is Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credit available?

CPE points can be the incentive everyone needs. Points can be given for attendance, but even better if they are for presenting, active participation or contributing to online discussion via social media, forums etc. (e.g. 1 CPE point for 2 contributions plus 2 comments on contributions by others).

Enlist a co-ordinator

Someone with journal club experience who can schedule the meetings, organise a roster of presenters and support newbie facilitators is a must.

A format helps, but be creative

Avoid lecturing in "chalk and talk" or "death by PowerPoint" style. Try these ideas:

- [Interactive presentation](#) with no pre-reading requirement
- [Structured Review Instrument](#) (head to the article's appendix for the format)
- [Team competition](#) can be very engaging

Keep it short

Allow 10 mins to present the article then 20 mins for discussion about methodology and clinical issues. [Here's how to do this.](#)

Keep it light

Remember – the idea is to weigh the strengths against the weaknesses of the article. Don't pull it apart or criticise the author/s.

Encourage everyone to participate

The club is for everyone, not just the outspoken ones! Invite opinions and ask individuals to share their thoughts, including those participating online. Consider a Teams channel for follow-up comments and suggestions.

Create a 1-page handout

These notes will guide your presentation and can be shared as a storable record of the topic, often called a CAT (Critically Appraised Topic). Dartmouth University recommends this [CAT template](#) but for a deeper dive into CAT writing take a look at this article by [Sadigh and colleagues](#). Oxford CEBM (Centre for Evidence Based Medicine) created [CATmaker](#) software to generate CATs. Download and try it!

Helpful resources

Critical appraisal checklist

Printable research evaluation checklists for many study types:

- [Critical Appraisal Skills Program \(CASP\) checklists](#)
- [Oxford's CEBM tools](#)
- [Dartmouth Libraries' checklists](#)
- [Joanna Briggs Institute checklists](#)
- [International Centre for Allied Health Evidence \(iCAHE\) checklist](#)
- [Quality Improvement Minimum Quality Criteria Set \(QI-MQCS\)](#)

TREAT journal club resources

The Tailoring Research Evidence and Theory (TREAT) journal club format was developed by health professionals and researchers at Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, Queensland, Australia. The [TREAT website](#) provides practical templates and resources to support engaging meetings.

After more ideas?

Contact SCHI Library!

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