

Start a Journal Club

A Simple Approach to Supporting Evidence Based Practice

Authors: Tania Johnston, Lecturer, CSU
Joe Acker, Senior Lecturer, CSU
Alan Batt, Clinical Educator, NAC

Introduction

The emergence of FOAMed (Free Open Access Medical Education) has dramatically increased practitioner access to up-to-date continuing education while enhancing support for evidence based practice¹. The desire to share knowledge and keep abreast of the latest research is foundational amongst allied health clinicians. Since the first known group was started in 1875², the traditional journal club has proved an effective educational and quality improvement strategy in health³. A journal club is defined as “an educational meeting in which a group of individuals discuss current articles, providing a forum for a collective effort to keep up with the literature”². Typically hosted face-to-face in a casual setting, journal clubs are also proving popular in the online environment⁴. In a 2008 systematic literature review, the authors reported overwhelmingly that those who participated in a journal club improved their clinical knowledge and research appraisal skills. They also identified key characteristics of the most successful and sustainable journal clubs³. Despite medical education being available online, the idea of gathering together with likeminded colleagues holds an appeal.



Figure 1. CSU staff and paramedic students participating in a journal club (5)

10 Suggested Steps to Start a Journal Club

1. Nominate a leader
2. Identify a comfortable venue
3. Select a convenient and regular date and time (monthly)
4. Choose an interesting and relevant journal article
5. Email article to participants one week prior
6. Select and share an evaluation tool (see sample at prehospitalresearch.au)
7. Leader drafts a few points to facilitate discussion and provides printed copies of the article
8. Bring snacks and drinks to encourage a social and relaxed atmosphere
9. Seek feedback from participants
10. Rotate facilitator role amongst interested participants

Reasons to Attend a Journal Club

- Keep up to date with new knowledge
- Become more familiar with current research
- Learn to critically analyse research
- Encourage further research
- Improve your practice & improve patient care
- Build your network and community of practice
- Add to your CPD portfolio (adapted from prehospitalresearch.au)



Figure 2. CSU staff and paramedic students participating in a journal club (5)

What is a Journal Club?

An educational meeting in which a group of individuals discuss current articles, providing a forum for a collective effort to keep up with the literature.²

Feedback from paramedic student journal club participants:

Being a part of a health profession requires having up to date knowledge, and journal club is an easy and enjoyable way to do so! Participant 1

I enjoyed the easy going nature and company of all participants. A very comfortable and fun atmosphere was created making it easy to discuss the challenging concepts! Participant 2

I particularly liked the relaxed feel and discussing things with others who are interested in the same thing. Participant 3

الإسعاف National
الوطني Ambulance

++++

Contact details

Tania Johnston – tjohnston@csu.edu.au
Joe Acker – jacker@csu.edu.au
Alan Batt – abatt@prehospitalresearch.eu