How to Develop a Successful Journal Club

International Transplant Nurses Society

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Is your institution discussing implementation of evidence-based practice? Are you a part of your institution's efforts to achieve "Magnet Status"? Are you interested in improving patient outcomes? Then organizing a group of your peers to develop a journal club is a great idea! A formal journal club facilitates discussing and evaluating new research and its application to practice and improving patient care. The advantages of using a journal club are that you and your peers can keep current with new transplant knowledge, learn to evaluate the strength of the evidence, promote implementation of new knowledge into practice, and improve patient outcomes.

Follow these steps as you begin your successful journal club:

Step 1

Identify a leader to organize the journal club project. This should be someone who is committed to the concept and is willing to organize the project. Initially, this could be a clinical educator, clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, nurse manager, or senior staff member with journal club members taking turns after the first meeting to lead subsequent journal club sessions.

Step 2

Identify the goals of the journal club. If the group is fairly inexperienced in critiquing research, then a worthy goal is to critique the same article as a group so that sharing and discussion about how to critique a research article can occur. If the group is more experienced, a clinical problem can be identified and several research articles that study the clinical problem can be critiqued and summarized so that practice changes can be made if appropriate.

Step 3

Set up a convenient meeting time and location (e.g., monthly during lunch in a hospital meeting room or at a local restaurant for an early dinner).

Step 4

Share copies of the research article(s) and the critiques/summaries before the meeting with interested individuals.

Step 5

Hold the journal club (encourage active participation of those attending by using discussion questions).

Step 6

Evaluate the journal club (e.g., at the end of the session, gather feedback from participants.) Determine how the next journal club meeting could be made more beneficial, e.g., encourage more staff attendance, hold more than one session, tape-record the session for those unable to attend. You may want to consider using email to facilitate the article distribution or critique if it is difficult to get everyone together at the same time. Another idea is to post the article critiques around the units so that staff members who were unable to attend can review the information after the meeting.

The following are questions that you and your colleagues can use to evaluate the randomized controlled trial research literature (Malloch & Porter-O-Grady, 2006):

Were the results valid?

- Were patients randomized?
- Was randomization concealed?
- Were patients analyzed in the groups to which they were randomized?
- Were groups shown to be similar in all known determinants of outcomes or were analyses adjusted for differences?
- Were patients aware of group allocation?
- Were clinicians aware of group allocation?
- Were outcome assessors aware of group allocation?
- Was follow-up complete?

What are the results?

- How large was the intervention effect?
- How precise was the estimate of the intervention effect?

How can I apply the results?

- Were the study patients similar to the patients in my clinical setting?
- Were all important outcomes considered?
- Are the likely intervention benefits worth the potential harm and costs?

For non-interventional studies, you can use the following types of questions to review the article:

Were the results valid?

- How were the subjects selected and are they similar to the patient population you care for?
- Are the procedures for recruiting subjects and collecting data well described? Do these procedures appear to be consistent?
- Did the researcher give attention to using valid and reliable tools to capture the study data?

What are the results?

- Was the researcher looking for relationships between variables or comparing differences between groups on the variables of interest?
- Are there any significant relationships or differences?

How can I apply the results?

- What is the implication of the findings for a) nursing practice? b) research needs? c) educational use?

The journal club can be a valuable way of increasing understanding of the research process and enhancing use of research findings to improve transplant nursing care!

You can use the following tools and the critiquing questions that we have presented to help you as you begin to read and summarize the literature in a journal club. The Research Report Summary and Critiquing Form can assist you in summarizing a single research article, while the Research Report Summary and Critiquing Table is helpful when you are summarizing multiple articles, for example, if you are developing a review of the literature.

References

Burns, N. & Grove, S. (2005). *The practice of nursing research. Conduct, critique, and utilization* (5th ed.). St. Louis: Elsevier.

Kleinpell, R. (2002). Rediscovering the value of the journal club. *American Journal of Critical Care*, 11(5), 412-414.

Malloch, K. & Porter-O-Grady, T. (2006). *Introduction to evidence-based practice in nursing and health care*. Boston: Jones and Barlett.

Research Report Summary And Critiquing Form

Date: _____

Prepared By: _____

Citation (author(s), year, title, volume, issue, pages):

_____

Introduction: _____

Purpose and/or Problem Statement: _____

Literature Review: _____

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework: _____

Hypotheses and/or Research Questions: _____

Research Methodology/Design (setting, subjects, sample size, selection): _____

Variables:

Independent (Causes the effect that is being studied. Found in experimental, quasi-experimental, and correlational studies.) _____

Dependent (Measured effect or outcome thought to result from or depend on the independent variable. Found in experimental, quasi-experimental, and correlational studies.) _____

Study Variables: (Characteristics or qualities that are to be measured, identified, or described. Found in exploratory and descriptive studies.) _____

Data Collection and Measurement:

Procedure of data collection: _____

Instruments used: _____

Reliability (consistency): Does the author report reliability of instrument? _____

Validity (accuracy): Does the author report validity of instrument? _____

Data Analysis/Results: _____

Study Strengths: _____

Study Weaknesses: _____

Discussion/Clinical Implications: _____

Research Report
Summary and Critiquing Table

Author	Purpose	Theoretical Framework	Sample	Methods	Measures	Results	Strengths/ Limitations	Discussion

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