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How to set up a Journal club? Tips for first time visits and starting a journal club for radiographers

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Abstract

Journal clubs are getting more and more popular and are seen in many variations. A classic journal club is a structured educational meeting for a group of people to discuss, debate, and examine published articles. Journal clubs can be used to gain the latest knowledge in new areas of interest. It is important to educate radiographers and students to use a critical approach when discussing research. This may or may not lead to a new standard of practice.

Journal club meetings can be initiated from e.g., clinical departments, educational institutions, groups with special interests e.g., statistics, modality, or by established research groups.

The workload is typically reading one or two articles as preparation for each meeting and pointing out a presenter with the task of recapitulating the study aim, method, result, and conclusion. However, it is not expected that the journal club members read the paper(s) thoroughly. The interesting part is the presenter's perspective and interpretation of the

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selected paper and the discussion followed by the rest of the group members. This tutorial presents how to start a journal club and explains simple steps to consider before the first meeting.

Introduction

The focus of this tutorial is to provide a practical guide to start journal clubs for radiographers.

How to describe a journal club? The format varies depending on the organizer and participants but is always an educational meeting where knowledge is shared and discussed. Traditionally, medical doctors have participated in journal clubs (1) but today journal clubs are used in many healthcare professions including management and students (2-3,6). Unfortunately, journal clubs are not widely used in the field of radiography in the Scandinavian countries. It is important to provide radiographers opportunity to develop clinical skills. Furthermore, educational institutions e.g., university of applied sciences may consider providing journal clubs to radiographer students to practice and develop radiography knowledge and skills throughout their education to be prepared working in a fast-paced clinical setting. An increasing number of papers in the scientific literature supports the importance of journal clubs as a place to improve clinical evidence-based practice and profession development.

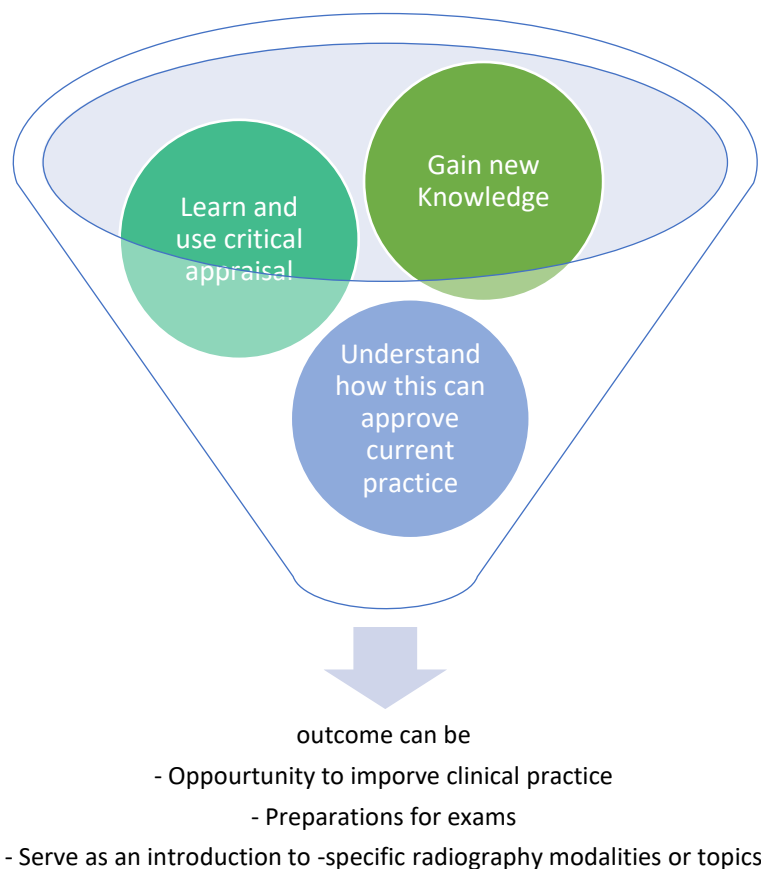


Figure 1. Shows the typically and outcome of a journal club

Planning an effective Journal club

How effective is journal clubs? A Cochrane review stated that journal club has positive effects on participants knowledge, but the effect of teaching critical appraisal is debatable (4). This is disappointing facts, but others have found that journal clubs can increase knowledge on epidemiology and biostatistics (5,9). The goal for a journal club is not to have the group members to read a high number of papers but to focus on latest knowledge by providing an active learning environment.

All groups need to have a leader to be effective. This is also important in journal clubs. The leader can have a formal or informal role and the leadership can be shared between the group members. The leader can be responsible for sending calendar invitations, find and book a suitable room, facilitate the meeting(s), and perhaps order catering. Catering has been acknowledged as a legitim way to increase the number of participants (7). Number of meetings per year can vary, however some papers prefer meetings intervals as monthly (6,8).

It is important to have the support of the department heads. Furthermore, make sure the department manager also thinks the time for meetings is suitable in the departments fast-paced clinical work environment. This will provide less risk for disruption.

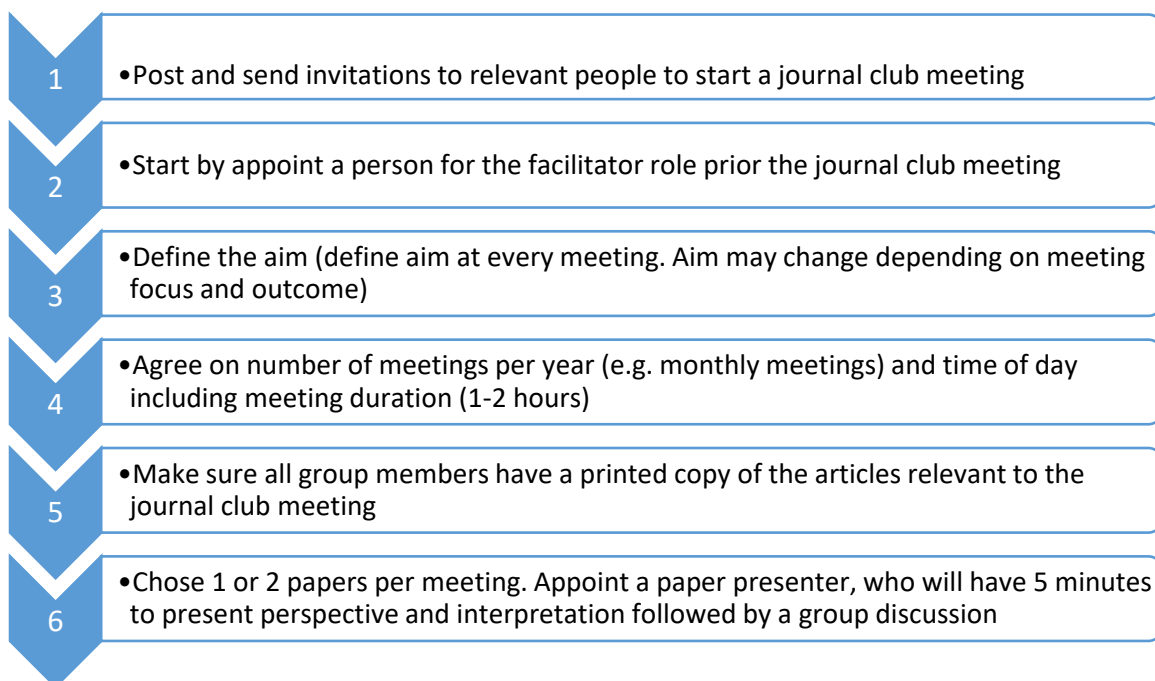


Figure 2. Six steps to start a journal club

What can the presenter highlight? The presenter can focus on these suggested steps (figure 3). In the meeting a deeper understand on the articles occurs during the reading, debating, and analyzing. This is important because the overall aim could be to evaluate the methods applicability to clinical practice (2).

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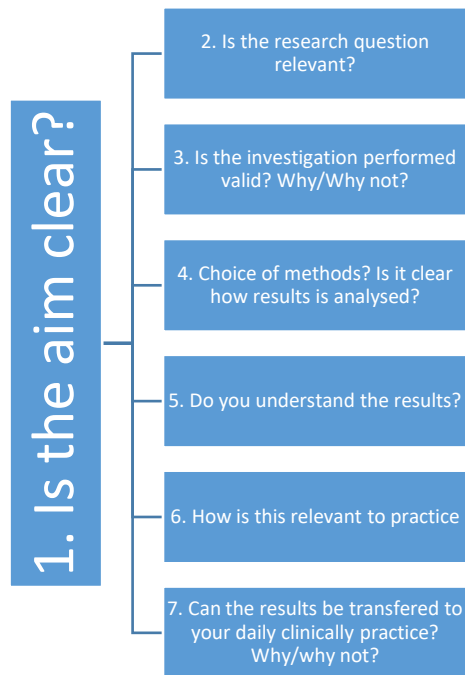


Figure 3. Seven steps to present a paper during a journal club meeting. The presenter has 5 minutes to provide an overview of the article selected by presenting a summarize of the aim, the methods, the results, and the conclusion. Then the most important part is what the presenter own perspectives off the paper.

How to talk about quality? It is important that the group members understand the differences and hierarchy of study design.



Figure 4. Hierarchy of study design.

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Study design can therefore be used as a first meeting topic and can be revisited when new members are enrolled. Forsen et al provides a checklist that can be used to discuss papers during a journal club (1). Planning a journal club in detail a check list presented by Zagury-Orly et al is highly recommended (11). It can be valuable to include a checklist during the first meeting to discuss points of view of the paper systematically. Before ending the meeting, it is recommended that the facilitator summarize outcome e.g., learning points, recommendation, and actions (10).

Conclusion

All healthcare professions can benefit of joining a journal club including radiographer and radiographer students. This tutorial presents how to start a journal club and explain simple steps to consider before first meeting. The wide range of topics that can be discussed during journal club meetings is highly flexible and it has high potential to address educational development. A hope with this tutorial is to encourage readers to begin or join journal clubs in radiography or related fields.

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