

ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF JOURNAL CLUBS IN HONING THE RESEARCH SKILLS OF NON CLINICAL POST GRADUATES AND TEACHERS IN A GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGEAparna C¹**HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:**

Aparna C. "Assessment of the Role of Journal Clubs in Honing the Research Skills of Non-Clinical Post Graduates and Teachers in a Government Medical College". Journal of Evolution of Medical and Dental Sciences 2015; Vol. 4, Issue 85, October 22; Page: 14753-14756, DOI: 10.14260/jemds/2015/2100

ABSTRACT: The general purpose of a journal club is to facilitate thorough discussion on a particular article from a standard journal and its implications in clinical practice and research. **AIM:** To assess the utility of journal clubs as a post-graduate curriculum in a government medical college. **MATERIAL AND METHODS:** Thirty postgraduates and thirty teachers from various non-clinical departments were included in the study. **RESULTS:** eighty six percent of the postgraduates opined that journal clubs enhance their research skills, 90% of the teachers also felt the same. **CONCLUSION:** journal clubs help update knowledge, enhance research skills and motivate faculty to publish research papers in journals.

KEYWORDS: Journal Club, Post Graduate Curriculum, Research Skills.

INTRODUCTION: Journal clubs are academic meetings where a selected article from a journal is discussed thoroughly.⁽¹⁾ The first mention of a journal club is found in the 1835-54 memoirs of British surgeon sir James Paget. Sir William Osler is widely credited as establishing the first journal club at McGill university in 1875.^{(2),(3)} The benefits of attending a journal club are; it links research to clinical practice by encouraging critical review of the current medical literature. It can also act as a vehicle for the application of evidence based medicine. Other advantages being, honing the research skills, allowing academic debate between colleagues, knowing about various statistical methodologies. Drawbacks are articles read out from mediocre journals may provide wrong concepts. Practically all the sophisticated methods described in the journals may not be available in our departments.

MATERIAL AND METHODS: The present study is conducted in a Government medical college. Thirty post graduates and thirty teachers from various non-clinical departments have participated in the study.

RESULTS: In the present study, 100% of post graduates agreed that journal clubs are part of their curriculum, and useful. 86% of postgraduates opined that journal clubs are definitely useful in enhancing the research skills. Whereas 14% felt that journal clubs help enhance their research skills as well as analytical skills. 76% wished to conduct them once in 2 weeks, 24% once in a month, 63% of them said they act as tools to practice evidence based medicine, 78% agreed that they provide basic concept for thesis work, 83% said journal clubs help them keep abreast of recent concepts. (Table1) Coming to the teachers, 100% opined that journal clubs are conducted regularly and attendance is made compulsory. 63% said journal was not rotated 2 weeks prior.

68% said it helps them to keep abreast of recent trends, 90% opined that it has enhanced their research skills, 67% said they are motivated to publish articles in journals, 100% agreed it

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provides continuing medical education, 44% said that controversies were discussed, only 23% said they are inspired to write letters to the editor, 78% are satisfied with conduction of journal clubs. 10 % have suggested few modifications. (Table 2).

Sl. No.	Question	Yes	No
1	Are journal clubs a part of the PG teaching curriculum in your department?	100%	
2	Do you find them useful?	100%	
3	What aspect of your skills are improved after attending journal clubs (theoretical/research skills/communicative skills, analytical skills)	86%, 14%	
4	How frequently in you wish to conduct a journal club once in week/ once in a month	76%, 24%	
5	Do you think journal clubs serve as tools to enhance practice of evidence based medicine?	63%	37%
6	Does it help in providing a basic concept for your thesis work?	78%	22%
7	Does it help you in keeping abreast of the recent developments?	83%	17%
8	Advantages and disadvantages of journal clubs		
9	Suggestions regarding conducting a journal club	14%	
Table 1: Results of questionnaire for post graduates -30			

Sl. No.	Question	Yes	No
1	Are journal clubs conducted regularly in your department	100%	
2	Is attendance of teachers made compulsory	100%	
3	Is the journal rotated 2 wks prior to the meeting?	63%	37%
4	Does it help you keep abreast of the recent advances	68%	32%
5	What aspect of your skills is improved after attending the journal club(theoretical knowledge, research skills/ clinical skills, analytical skills)	10%, 90%	
6	Does it arise interest to publish articles in journals?	67%	33%
7	Does it provide continuing medical education?	100%	
8	Are controversial points discussed thoroughly?	44%	56%
9	Does it inspire you to write "letters to the editor"?	23%	77%
10	Are you satisfied with the conduct of journal clubs	78%	22%
11	If no why? Can you suggest any modifications?	10%	
Table 2: Results of questionnaire for teachers -30			

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DISCUSSION: Journal clubs are a part of post-graduate curriculum in many medical schools. Sir William Osler is credited to be the first person to initiate journal clubs in 1875. From then onwards journal clubs have evolved in to a forum of continuing medical education.⁽³⁾ This powerful educational tool has played a major role in appraising the critical skills of medical doctors. The foundation of an outstanding journal club presentation rests on the choice of an interesting and well-written paper for discussion.⁽²⁾

Furthermore, honing presentation skills and mastering the ability to critically appraise the evidence are additional advantages. The journal club is proposed as a means to address the theory-to-practice gap.⁽⁴⁾ According to Swift evidence based discussions in journal clubs are more useful.⁽⁵⁾

Recently journal clubs have begun to take advantage of Twitter allowing geographically diverse groups to participate in a single discussion. The first Twitter Journal club was an Allergy Journal Club run by Dr. Ves Dimoz in 2008. They used Twitter to document the discussion of coverage of a traditional in-person Journal club. This journal club established the use of hashtags to organize journal club comments. A junior doctor in the West Midlands and a medical student at Cambridge University have kicked off a new movement in the medical community by launching the first ever twitter journal club.

All the post graduates and teachers in the present study understood the concept of journal clubs and agreed that all the departments are conducting journal clubs regularly. Majority have felt that it helped them keep abreast of recent advances, provides evidence based medicine provides a basic concept for thesis work. Some of the faculty members were stimulated to write “Letters to the editor” if they found any controversial point in a particular article. But few suggested that, there should be access to international journals, and also journals with high impact factor. Web based discussions should be available, so that there is direct access to authors and editors. Recently American journal of critical care has launched journal clubs, but for a price. It would be better if the universities provide free web sites.

Some have opined that controversial points have to be discussed thoroughly, immediate appraisal and feedback opportunity should be given and interdepartmental journal clubs have to be arranged.

CONCLUSION: Journal clubs enhance the research skills and also update knowledge about recent trends, and also help opening up academic debate between colleagues. They will be more useful if access to international journals is made available.

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