

SWaP & Journal Clubs

Evidence-based practice is vital in ensuring that the standards of care are being achieved within the health service, where updating your knowledge and understanding of the newest evidence can be seen as a demanding task. SWaP was founded, because a group of sonographers believed that it is important to become a part of the evidence base in order to continually learn and improve ourselves as a profession, embedding evidence in practice.

There are many ways to become aware of existing evidence with reading and discussing articles often being used as an excellent way to engage in professional development. Journal clubs and in particular online journal clubs have demonstrated a number of benefits for those who participate, including: access to published research, opportunity for online networking, collaboration and a dynamic source of educational CPD (1).

Fortunately for sonographers BMUS have announced that they will be hosting a Twitter Journal Club! This club runs like other journal discussion groups, where the article is available to BMUS members as well as being free for non-members via the peer reviewed journal "Ultrasound", where questions and a discussion about the article occurs online via Twitter!

Access to the details of the Twitter Journal Club sessions: (link)

For those who may not have participated in an online Twitter Journal Club before, SWaP have put together some free guidance for how to participate and make the most of this opportunity as a CPD activity!

How to prepare for a journal club

As a basis, pragmatic evidence-based medicine means we should consider research in every form. Journal clubs on twitter are great to discuss aspects from a piece of writing, but it can seem overwhelming to know how to take part in the discussion. As previously mentioned, often the host will often also provide some questions to lead the discussions, but it can help to do a small amount of background work prior to participating in the live discussions. A place to begin can be to evaluate the article itself prior to the live chat and identify the merits and context of the paper.

Simple steps to appraise the article:

1. Does the article pose a useful or interesting question to answer
2. Evaluate whether the research is robust (methods)
3. Identify what the findings are
4. Assess whether you can utilise this new knowledge in your own practice

By following these steps, you have begun to critically appraise the evidence (an absolutely essential skill for any modern practitioner).

It then goes without saying that participating in journal clubs are generally fun, allowing those who participate to engage with others in the profession and helps us think laterally. Certainly, participating in these types of exercises often plants the

ideas and inquiries that later blossom into impactful research. The online Journal Club can be a great way of both learning about a new topic and connecting with others who have a similar interest.

Guidance for critical appraisal of publications:

<https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/>

<https://bestpractice.bmj.com/info/toolkit/ebm-toolbox/critical-appraisal-checklists/>

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/child-health/sites/child-health/files/library_critical_appraisal_handout.pdf

<https://www.cebm.net/2014/06/critical-appraisal/>

How To Participate

To take part you will need a twitter account, this is free and easy to set up if you do not have one already, follow this link to create an account:

<https://twitter.com/i/flow/signup>

Twitter is an online way of communicating messages. To communicate you send "tweets" to others on Twitter. Each tweet can be no longer than 140 characters and when you send a tweet message to another twitter account, you highlight your message to another account by adding their twitter name, which begins with an "@" sign. So, for example, you can send a tweet to SWaP by using our twitter name in the message: "@sonographer_wap Hi SWaP, thanks for showing us how to use Twitter".

Once you have an account and want to take part in group discussions or read content all discussing the same topic (such as a journal club), you need to link in to the "tag" or "#". A # is a way to collect all of the discussions on that topic together, so for discussions about SWaP, follow or search for "#SWaP" – and use that # in your tweets so others can see what you have said in the group discussion (otherwise it is hard to see these tweets!)



Now you have an account and are ready to participate, if you have not done so in the past and want to know what participating looks like there are lots of ways that this can look, depending on how you want to become involved. To help you out we have a list of some ways that you can participate:

- Be an active listener. If you have never used twitter or participated in a twitter chat then this could be a good option to start with. Being an active listener involves reading the discussions and the workflow of the chat, liking and retweeting the ones that you enjoy or agree with.
- Participate with direct conversation and threads. When joining the journal club, you can choose to contribute to an existing discussion within the thread by replying to individuals and engaging in conversation (just make sure to include the hashtag for the particular journal chat).

There are loads of tips and advice on how to maximise participation in twitter journal club chats in the links below:

<https://scicommjc.org/ultimate-guide-participate-twitter-chats/>

<http://www.wecomunities.org/tweet-chats/chat-guide>

<http://www.tchat.io/> is a useful website for joining in Tweet chats. If you log in and add the appropriate #, the hashtag will then be automatically added to each tweet you send. The feed automatically updates as you chat with other twitter users in real time.

References

1. Bolderston et al, (2018). Twitter Journal Clubs and Continuing Professional Development: An Analysis of a #MedRadJClub Tweet Chat. Radiography 24(1): 3-8. [Online] Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29306372/>