



Genop
advert

A Valuable Tool

Postgraduate Journal Club for Aesthetic Medical Practitioners

DR DEBBIE NORVAL provides further insight on the new, innovative AAMSSA project that sets up journal clubs for aesthetic practitioners nationwide – an academic forum based on sharing journal articles and current research in aesthetic and functional medicine...

The journal club has survived over a century in a rapidly changing medical world, and has thus become a medical institution. The first regular and formal journal club was established by Sir William Osler at McGill University in 1875. From its inception, the philosophy of journal club was to share current knowledge, and translate it into evidence-based patient care. Currently, the journal club is a common educational tool, with its role in contemporary medical education for postgraduates being considerable.

A journal club can be defined as a group of colleagues who meet regularly to discuss the relevance, strengths, weaknesses and clinical application of selected articles from the medical literature.

Keeping up with medical literature
The volume of medical literature – especially in the rapidly growing field of medical aesthetics – has exploded exponentially. It has been estimated that it would take an incredible (not to mention impossible) 627.5 hours per month for a clinician to keep up with the latest literature!

So, while it's literally unfeasible for a modern doctor to keep up with medical

literature, it is still imperative that the aesthetic practitioner remain vigilant of the constant updates in the field. Journal clubs help increase the exposure to evolving medical literature and promote adherence to evidence-based medicine.

AAMSSA Initiative
The Aesthetic and Anti-Aging Medicine Society of South Africa (AAMSSA) has initiated a project to set up journal clubs for aesthetic practitioners nationwide. This is an academic forum based on sharing journal articles and current research in aesthetic and functional medicine. It is also a safe space to share case studies,

Objectives for a successful journal club

- **Acquiring**, disseminating and applying new medical information
- **Training** in clinical decision-making and gaining critical appraisal skills
- **Promoting** lifelong learning skills in evidence-based medicine
- **Improving** reading habits
- **Providing** an interactive and social opportunity for peer-to-peer learning
- **Encouraging** small group participation, presentation and communication
- **Documenting** practice-based learning and improvement in patient care

challenges and complications, while providing a system of mutual support for colleagues working in the field.

The journal clubs are additionally CPD accredited through AAMSSA and are independent of any sponsorship, product or company. The format is a small group setting and numbers are ideally under 12, to allow for interactive learning and sharing. However, doctors are required to be members of AAMSSA to participate.

Currently, there are five AAMSSA-run journal clubs in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, but the goal is to establish several small groups in all main centres.

Aims of a journal club
Journal clubs offer rare and protected teaching time through interactive group discussion with peers. They provide a unique opportunity to promote evidence-based decision making, discussion and debate. A journal club is also a platform for mentoring of doctors new to the field, providing encouragement and increased confidence.

Format
There are different forms of Journal clubs – from the traditional type where doctors select articles and critique their presentation using a structured review instrument – to a more problem- and evidence-based format. However,

Doctors belonging to an AAMSSA journal club have the mutual support of a WhatsApp group where **they are free to share day-to-day experiences, advice, anecdotes and challenges**

the latest guidelines for journal clubs emphasise a move away from biostatistics and epidemiology, and more emphasis on the sharing of relevant case studies, critical appraisal, group discussion and problem-solving.

The ideal format of an AAMSSA journal club is that of a small interactive group that meets at a specified time on a regular basis. An attendance register is taken and the time is structured with an identified leader per session. After discussing theory, there is also the opportunity for practical demonstrations of any new techniques if applicable. Refreshments and snacks are provided.

Access to medical journals
Many journal articles are available for free online, e.g. *Prime Journal*,

International Journal of Aesthetic and Anti-Ageing Medicine. Subscribing to some of the best aesthetic journals is also worth considering. Internet sites such as PubMed, Medline and Google Scholar require membership for access to some of the full articles.

Articles discussed at journal club are shared in a journal club Dropbox for easy access to members at all times.

Whatsapp support group

Doctors belonging to an AAMSSA journal club have the mutual support of a WhatsApp group where they are free to share day-to-day experiences, advice, anecdotes and challenges. It's a useful means of asking any questions that arise in the individual practices on a day-to-day basis. The WhatsApp group is a way of interacting, supporting, uplifting and encouraging fellow colleagues, and is especially helpful for managing challenges and complications.

Barriers and challenges

Very little additional infrastructure is required to run a journal club, with minimal start-up and maintenance costs. The biggest barrier is the time doctors need to sacrifice away from their busy practices. In order for a journal club to remain interactive and manageable, the size needs to be contained. The ideal number is 12 or fewer per journal club. The Johannesburg doctors' journal club has split the functional medicine

group from the aesthetics group for this reason.

Personal experience

While the Johannesburg doctors' journal club was established in 2015 and started with four members, it has quickly grown to 16. The group is represented by aesthetic practitioners working in private practice in Johannesburg, with differing levels of experience in the field – both in aesthetic medicine and functional/integrative medicine. The group includes a dermatologist and has an oculoplastic surgeon on call for the group at all times in case of ocular emergency.

This interaction, mutual support and generous sharing of knowledge and experience in the journal club have been invaluable, with the volume of high-quality, relevant information shared being exceptional. Meanwhile, the interaction of like-minded colleagues – which includes healthy debate and discussion – contributes to a level of excellence in medical practice. The WhatsApp chat group is a very busy, extremely interesting and often entertaining addition to the regular meetings.

Moreover, the group is based on academic aesthetic medicine and there is no input or influence from any outside company or sponsor. Patients come first and the focus is on evidence-based clinical patient care and best practice, not on business and profits.

Journal clubs offer rare and protected teaching time through interactive group discussion. They provide a unique opportunity to promote evidence-based decision-making, discussion and debate

Conclusion

The journal club is an integral part of doctors' continuing medical education, and an important step towards truly evidence-based practice. For it to be beneficial, its approach must be one in which the knowledge, attitudes and skills gained have a positive effect on patient care. The aesthetic doctors' journal club aims to foster deep and life-long learning so that, ultimately, patients receive the best quality care. **A2**

Any doctor wishing to initiate or participate in a journal club should contact Karen Nel at AAMSSA. karen@medsoc.co.za | T: +27 (0)83 458 5953 F: 086 729 8867

References

Deenadayalan Y, Grimmer-Somers K, Prior M, Kumar S.J. How to run an effective journal club: a systematic review. *Eval Clin Pract*. 2008 Oct; 14(5):898-911.

Alper BS, Hand JA, Elliott SG, et al. How much effort is needed to keep up with the literature relevant for primary care? *J Med Libr Assoc* 92:429-37, 2004

Lee AG, Boldt HC, Golnik KC, Arnold AC, Oetting TA, Beaver HA, Olson RJ, Carter K. Using the Journal Club to teach and assess competence in practice-based learning and improvement: a literature review and recommendation for implementation. *Surv Ophthalmol*. 2005 Nov-Dec; 50(6):542-8.

Belfield, C. et al. (2001) Measuring effectiveness for best evidence medical education: a discussion. *Medical Teacher*, 23(2):164-170.

Ebbert J, Montori VM, Schultz HJ. The journal club in postgraduate medical education: a systematic review. *Medical Teacher* Volume 23, 2001 - Issue 5 *Med Teach*. 2001; 23(5):455-61.

Burstein JL, Hollander JE, Barlas D. Enhancing the value of journal club: use of a structured review instrument. *Am J Emerg Med*. 1996 Oct; 14(6):561-3.

Afifi Y, Davis J, Khan K, Publicover M, Gee H. Education The journal club: a modern model for better service and training. *The Obstetrician & Gynaecologist* 2006;8:186-189

Rodriguez C, Victor C, Leonardi N, Sulo S, Littlejohn G. Barriers to Participation in an Online Nursing Journal Club at a Community Teaching Hospital. *J Contin Educ Nurs*. 2016 Dec 1;47(12):536-542.



Dr Debbie Norval
MBBCh (Rand), Dip Pall Med (UK), M Phil Pall Med (UCT), Adv Dip Aesthetic Med (FPD)

