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Starting A Journal Club

Why a Journal Club?

Journal clubs have been around for a long time; they are common in the medical field, where clinicians use them as a vehicle to stay current on new medical breakthroughs and practices. (Denehy, Janice 187).

Five Reasons for having a Journal Club

1. To highlight new findings
2. To teach practitioners how to search for interesting articles representing the best evidence to inform clinical practice
3. To encourage practitioners to read and appraise publications critically and give them the ability to do so.
4. To encourage practitioners to do applied clinical research and to show them how.
5. To improve debating skills, demonstrate leadership skills and aid peer mentorship. (Jeffery K Aronson 232)

Points to consider in starting up a Journal Club

1. *Identify purpose of the Club and intended target audience* to review and share up-to-date medical information found in journals which would aid in the practice of evidence-based medicine. (Students/Faculty)
2. *Identify a committed leader*
Find someone who is committed to the idea and the importance of a journal club, someone who is willing to take the time and effort to not only present the idea but also to follow through with the details of organizing the club and keeping it going and growing through the school year.
3. *Plan on having the club for the entire Academic year*
A danger is to try it one time to see how it works out, because the momentum has not developed yet and the atmosphere for exchange has not been well established.
4. *Plan on having the meeting on the same day and at the same time every month*
Once a month seems to be a realistic goal. You might want to vary location if you desire to have it at different participants' schools. Try to schedule the journal club at a time all people will be able to attend. Usually an hour is enough time if there is a plan for the meeting and a facilitator to keep participants on task. If people want to stay longer to socialize, that is a bonus.
5. *At the beginning select easy to read articles applicable to the area / school of study*
Find articles that will promote discussion and make all participants feel that this a nonthreatening, worthwhile endeavour. Leadership articles may be a good start. (Denehy 187 - 188)
6. Develop an evaluation tool to gather feedback from participants and distribute to attendees following the session. The feedback gained would help to improve the next meeting.

How the Library can assist your Journal Club?

1. Provide the space to meet
2. Assist the leader in providing articles and resources for critiquing articles, for meetings
3. Support in promoting the journal club and meetings

References

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