

Welch Center Journal Club Presenter Tips

Goals of Journal Club:

1. Promote understanding of understanding of key controversies in the field;
2. Explore methods and their application to specific scientific areas;
3. Develop communication and critical thinking skills.

Journal club is a forum to practice reviewing articles, an essential skill for Part B of the written Comprehensive Exams and a career in epidemiology or clinical research.

Three steps to a dynamic and productive journal club discussion:

1. **SELECT an article:** You will be provided with the pre-approved list of articles at least two weeks prior to your presentation date. The TA will be able to assist you in selecting an article or identifying an alternative article that is not on the list. Consider articles on general topics that are of interest to you and will *generate discussion* with the group.

P.S. Consider which topics have been discussed earlier in the year...

Variety = Good ☺

2. **READ the article:** Draw upon your knowledge and background; read with a critical eye. Consider the hypothesis, study design, sources of bias, choice of methods, and presentation of results. How can readers make sense of the numbers? Are the results novel? Are they reproducible? Does the discussion accurately interpret results, specifically in the context of existing knowledge? How does the study extend or alter our current understanding? What are some of the limitations and strengths of the study? Are there limitations not discussed in the manuscript? What are the implications of the findings? Were there letters written to the editor of the journal in response to this publication? Was there media coverage? Prepare focused discussion questions in case there is a lull in group participation.

3. **PRESENT the article:**

- Introduce yourself to the group and explain why you chose this article.
- Briefly describe the article in a few sentences and place it in the context of the current state of the literature.
- **DO NOT READ** sections directly from the article; instead, paraphrase in your own words, and direct the group to the relevant discussion areas.
- Especially **DO NOT READ** the methods section word-for-word. Briefly summarize the methods, and consider instead describing the methods that were used to generate the data *by leading a discussion of the tables and figures*.
- Bring handouts, if appropriate, such as a copy of supplemental material, editorials, or questionnaire(s) that were used in the study.

Remember: Everyone has read the paper; set the stage and launch right into the results and discussion.

More group talk = Good

Remember: The group has a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, from Epi 751 to a lifetime of experience in epidemiology. The best discussions focus on general methods and study design issues that may have broad implications for future research.