

# **Journal Club**

**M.Sc. Translational Research in Biomedicine**

**School of Molecular Biology and Genetics**

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# Introduction

- Literature continually expanding but...
- Not necessarily equally important papers are produced
- Quantity vs quality...
- Critical reading and analysis are imperative

# Definition of Journal Club

Group of individuals who regularly meet to critically read, understand and evaluate recent articles published on the discipline to which they are involved.

Usually organized around a defined subject which periodically may change depending on the current interests of the associated group.

- Originating from a club of like-minded people who wished to discuss topics of common interests (science in this case).
- Because of its recognized benefits, it has become incorporated in the curriculum of higher degrees (M.Sc. or Ph.D.) or professional training (e.g. medical residency) as a requirement.

# Aims of the Journal Club

- to increase knowledge on a topic of common interest
- to keep up with the vast amount of information available
- to develop skills in research article analysis
- to learn how to critically evaluate journal articles
- to develop skills in professional presentations
- to improve communication skills within a group of peers
- to promote cohesion and collaboration between members of a team (research group, medical students in the same specialty)
- to develop ideas for future work
- to get inspiration by the work of others

# Benefits for the presenter

- Improves your background knowledge on the topic of interest
- Makes you read more - both on your immediate topic and beyond it
- Improves reading habits enabling critical thinking, meta-questioning, meta-thinking
- Increases your responsibility on critically presenting somebody else's work to your peers
- Improves your presentation skills
- Makes you socialize, facilitates your interactions within the institute or other scientific/work environment, networking

# Benefits for the audience

- Improves your background knowledge on the topic of interest
- Saves you time from reading on this topic
- Improves your active listening skills, enabling critical thinking
- Increases your ability on critically assessing:
  - literature
  - somebody else's presentation of literature
- Helps you do something useful academically, even when you are having a slow day in the lab
- Makes you socialize, facilitates your interactions within the institute, networking
  - sometimes coffee, tea, biscuits, snacks are served
  - often this is sponsored by a company – you can chat with their representative about products and applications for your research; but also about job opportunities

# How to choose the papers

- **Ideally:**
- Different study designs
- Creating a controversy within a special topic
- In deep analysis on a special topic
- Choose relevant and newly appeared papers
- Avoid reviews (or not? ...rules may vary, check with “the locals”)
- Avoid your own work! This is not a forum for presenting the past 6 months of your research, or for getting feedback on results you wish to publish, or for getting reviews on first draft of a manuscript, or for (boasting about) your recent publication!
- This is not a research in progress (rip) meeting!!!

# How to present

- Intro (briefly present the author(s)' background, their team and their contribution of the topic)
- Short overview-beyond the abstract
- Present and evaluate data from the article
- Briefly outline the experimental design
- Key figures, graphs, tables, selected results
  - Be prepared to present more of the paper than your selections, or to answer questions beyond what you consider the key findings
- Conclusions made by the author(s)
- This is not *your* research or thesis, you do not need to defend it. BUT you need to make a fair and balanced review of it and to make it accessible to others.



# Suitable wording when talking

- “The article I am presenting is...”
- Give some background about the topic (optional if well known to audience)
- Give some background about the group that produced the research
- “The hypothesis was...”
- “The methods were...”
- “The results were...”
- “The authors discussion / interpretation / conclusion was that ...”

# Suitable wording for evaluation

- “The design was appropriate / poorly thought out / etc...”
- “The sample size was large enough / too small / etc...”
- “The article clearly mentioned its flaws / was missing / etc...”
- “The significance of this article was...”
- “I felt that this article...”
- “Similar research articles present corroborating / conflicting....”
- “Further research...”
  
- Generate participants’ interest!

# General Tips

- KEEP SLIDES SIMPLE —and explain with words where necessary
- **Talk in your own words!**
- There is a desirable “six line” rule for slides—more lines make for cluttered slides
- Do not read directly from your slides. It is more effective to elaborate verbally on what is written on the slides
- Talk to your audience! It improves every presentation if you make eye contact with your audience
- Never turn your back to the audience
- If you cannot remember something, do not try to hide it
- Arouse curiosity of the audience by identifying unexpected events/findings, suggesting provocative ideas

Journal Club  
Meeting 1  
Part 2

# Work plan for this semester

- The aim is to apply your skills from last semester (obtained from the Academic Skills module)
- Form groups of 3 or 2 members, around 6 groups in total
- Prepare a ~1500 word essay on the article (word or pdf style doc-upload to eClass)
- Two types of presentations:
  - Peer to peer – traditional journal club
  - Teaching / general audience style presentation

# Work plan for this semester

- Next Meetings:
- Week 1: Sunday 19 February 2023, 15:00-19:00 (today!)
- Week 2: No Journal Club Meeting
- Week 3: Sunday 30 April 2023, 12:00-14:00 (online)
- Week 4: Sunday 7 May 2023, 09:30-11:30 and 12:00-14:00 (in classroom)
- Other meetings with individual groups as required (through MS Teams)

# Work plan for this semester

- Between Week 1 (today) and Week 2:
- Form groups and email me your names & contact details
- Search for articles and email me these suggestions
- Online meeting(s) (MS Teams) between me and group members to examine, comment, approve the articles, give any other advice
  
- Week 3 early presentations(?)
- Week 4 presentations