

Things to consider when reading the articles prior to attending Journal Club:

- Is the article important?
- Will it help our readers to make better decisions and, if so, how?
- Will the article add enough to existing knowledge?
- Does the article read well and make sense? Does it have a clear message?

Specifically for research articles:

Originality - does the work add enough to what is already in the published literature? If so, what does it add? Please cite relevant references to support your comments on originality.

Importance of the work to general readers - does this work matter to clinicians, researchers, policymakers, educators, or patients? Will it help our readers to make better decisions and, if so, how? Is a general medical journal the right place for it?

Is the research question clearly defined and appropriately answered?

Overall design of study - appropriate and adequate to answer the research question?

Participants - adequately described, their conditions defined, inclusion and exclusion criteria described? How representative were the authors of patients whom this evidence might affect?

Methods - adequately described? Main outcome measure clear? Is the study fully reported in line with the appropriate reporting statement or checklist (these are all collected and regularly updated at <http://www.equator-network.org>)? Was the study ethical (this may go beyond simply whether the study was approved by an ethics committee or IRB)?

Results - answer the research question? Credible? Well presented?

Interpretation and conclusions - warranted by and sufficiently derived from/focused on the data? Discussed in the light of previous evidence? Is the message clear?

References - up to date and relevant? Any glaring omissions?

Abstract/summary/key messages/what this paper adds - reflect accurately what the paper says?

Documents in the supplemental files, eg. checklists for reporting statements such as CONSORT, PRISMA, and STROBE (see <http://www.equator-network.org> for other examples and for extensions to existing statements); and the protocol for an RCT. Do these properly match what is in the manuscript? Do they contain information that should be better reported in the manuscript, or raise questions about the work?