

REFERENCES

Journal Club support on the Web

- Before the Headlines  
www.sciencemediacentre.org/headlines-for-journalists
- BMJ Rapid Responses  
www.bmj.com/rapid-responses
- Cochrane Journal Club  
www.cochranelibrary.com/journal-club
- NEJM comments  
www.nejm.org

Appraisal Tools

- AGREE (Appraisal of Guidelines for Research and Evaluation)  
www.agreetrust.org
- CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme)  
www.casp-uk.net
- CEBM (Centre for Evidence Based Medicine)  
www.cebm.ox.ac.uk/resources/ebm-tools
- CONSORT (Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials)  
www.consort-statement.org
- GATE (Graphic Appraisal Tool for Epidemiological Studies)  
http://ebm.bmj.com/content/11/2/35.extract
- PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses)  
www.prisma-statement.org
- SIGN (Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network)  
www.sign.ac.uk/what-we-do/methodology/checklists

FURTHER SUPPORT

If you would like one-to-one support in preparing for a journal club presentation, contact us on [uhsussex.library@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.library@nhs.net)

Scan the QR code to the right to view our information skills teaching programme.



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# Journal Club tips and tools

## CRITICAL APPRAISAL TOOLS

The CONSORT (CONSolidated Standards of Reporting Trials) 2010 guideline is intended to improve the reporting of parallel-group randomized controlled trial (RCT), enabling readers to understand a trial's design, conduct, analysis and interpretation, and to assess the validity of its results. This can only be achieved through complete adherence and trans-

The Appraisal of Guidelines for Research & Evaluation (AGREE) Instrument was developed to address the issue of variability in the quality of practice guidelines.

It is important to assess the methods used to develop practice guidelines in order to be confident of the resulting recommendations. The AGREE instrument is a tool that assesses the methodological rigour and transparency in which a guideline is developed and it is used internationally.

CASP Checklist: 10 questions to help you make sense of a Systematic Review

How to use this appraisal tool: Three broad issues need to be considered in a systematic review study:

- Are the results of the study valid? (Section A)
- What are the results? (Section B)
- Will the results help locally? (Section C)

PRISMA 2009 Checklist

| Section/topic | # | Checklist item  |
|---------------|---|---|
| 1             | 1 | Identify the report as a systematic review, meta-analysis, or both.   |
| 2             | 2 | Provide a structured summary including: objectives, background, objectives, data sources, study eligibility criteria, participants, and interventions; study appraisal and synthesis methods; results; limitations, conclusions and implications for practice; systematic review registration number. |
| 3             | 3 | Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known.  |
| 4             | 4 | Provide an explicit statement of questions being addressed with reference to participants, interventions, comparisons, outcomes, and study design (PICOS).  |

Checklists

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Methodology checklist 1: systematic reviews and meta-analyses Checklist | Methodology checklist 2: randomised controlled trials Checklist Notes | Methodology checklist 3: cohort studies Checklist Notes |
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Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine

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Resources EBM tools Critical Appraisal tools

### Critical Appraisal tools

Critical appraisal worksheets to help you appraise the reliability, importance and

Critical appraisal is the systematic evaluation of clinical research papers in order to establish:

- Does this study address a clearly focused question?

## JOURNAL CLUB SUPPORT ON THE WEB



Visit the Cochrane Journal Club Archive to explore past issues of Cochrane Journal Club

### About the Journal

If you take part in a regular journal club, you can place your discussion questions to help you to explore more detail.



'Before the headlines' analyses are structured summaries of what the paper in question claim the strengths and limitations. This service is provided to the members of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS), Statisticians in the Pharmaceutical Industry (PSI) and experienced statisticians in academia and research.



### All rapid responses

Rapid responses are electronic comments to the editor. They enable our users to debate issues raised in articles published on bmj.com. A rapid response is first posted online. If you need the URL (web address) of an individual response, simply click on the response headline and copy the URL from the browser window. A proportion of responses will, after editing, be published online and in the print journal as letters, which are indexed in PubMed. Rapid responses are not indexed in PubMed and they are not journal articles. The BMJ reserves the right to remove responses which are being wilfully misrepresented as published articles.

See back page for resource web addresses

Brighton and Sussex NHS Library and Knowledge Service is part of University Hospitals Sussex NHS Trust  
[www.bsuh.nhs.uk/library](http://www.bsuh.nhs.uk/library)

## Step 1

### Identify the clinical question, topic or general subject area

Include:

- Your name
- The presentation date
- Full reference - authors, journal title, publication date, volume/part/page
- A brief description of the study (if this information is not included in the title), e.g. a large-scale multicentre RCT over 3 years comparing Tx A to Tx B' or 'A review paper looking at diagnostic tests for C'.

*Include note of level of evidence and journal impact factor*

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## Step 2

### Discuss the research methodology/design

Specifically discuss:

- Type of study (and age of paper and location)
- Patient inclusion/exclusion criteria
- Setting / condition / intervention
- Randomised, blinded, multicentre
- Sample size, whether it was achieved, % lost to follow up

*This is not just a tick list - ideally you should consider if the method was carried out appropriately, if there are any issues, flaws, biases, anything that makes it more (or less) relevant to your clinical practice*

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## Step 3

### Summarise the outcomes / results

Specifically discuss:

- Primary outcomes measured (and secondary, if relevant and applicable)
- Main results reported (include P value, 95% confidence intervals)

*Consider issues of sub-groups, other outcomes that should have been measured, are they clinical endpoints, surrogate biomarkers?*

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## Step 4

### Draw points from the discussion / conclusions

Specifically identify:

- Weaknesses in the study
- Other areas that should have been addressed
- Implications, contradictions, confusions
- Whether the study has been superseded by more recent knowledge/practice

*Does (or should) this paper change / influence / support your clinical practice?  
What is the 'take-home' message?*

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