

Pennsylvania Department of Health

Epidemiology Journal Club

Participants' Guidelines

Objective: The purpose of the Epidemiology Journal Club is to facilitate discussions of current scientific literature in epidemiology and public health in general. The Journal Club offers epidemiologists and other professionals an opportunity to engage in intellectual discourse and to learn from each other. Club meetings will take place approximately once every month from 11 a.m. to noon.

Meeting: A presenter and a facilitator will be identified in advance of each session. It is expected that the presenter will select a peer-reviewed article from a biomedical journal. The article will be distributed to participants approximately two weeks before the presentation. Club meetings are approximately once every month from 11 a.m. to noon.

Format: The facilitator will introduce the topic and moderate the session. The introduction should take approximately five minutes. The presenter should review the assigned article by covering essential parts of the study in a logical progression commonly used in biomedical journals, i.e., objective, design, methods (including data collection and statistical analysis), results and discussion. Areas covered in other types of articles such as synopses or perspectives, will be different and presenter should use the logical progression used by author(s) of the report.

Unanimously accepted on November 7, 2003

The presentation should take approximately 20 minutes. Presenters are encouraged to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the subject matter. Reviewing authoritative texts, and consulting with other colleagues can achieve this. In previous meetings, some presenters have provided additional information on statistical methods used by author(s).

Each presentation will be followed by 20 minutes of open discussion, moderated by the facilitator. After the open discussion, the presenter will summarize the overall paper for about 8 minutes and the facilitator will close the meeting during the last two minutes.

Participants: Journal Club members are encouraged to come on time. Unlike attendees of seminars or lectures, Journal Club members are expected to review the assigned literature in sufficient depth to allow for meaningful discussion. Members are encouraged to contribute to the meeting by asking questions, providing answers, and offering additional or alternative views.

Contribution: Participants are encouraged to volunteer as presenters and facilitators.

Secretary: The journal secretary is responsible for meeting announcements and distribution of reading articles and other materials in consultation with discussants.

Nkuchia M'ikanatha is currently serving as a volunteer Journal Club secretary until the Journal Club selects a secretary in whatever method the group chooses. In addition to Nkuchia, Dr. Gene Weinberg is serving as alternate volunteer secretary. Either one of them may also serve as a facilitator when none has been identified prior to a meeting.

Journal Club guidelines: Experiences from other journal clubs have demonstrated that formal guidelines result in optimal use of time. With this view, these guidelines were proposed by Nkuchia M'ikanatha and reviewed by Drs Weinberg, Lurie and Rankin. Participants present at the Nov. 7, 2003 meeting accepted them as Bureau of Epidemiology guidelines.

Guidelines were adjusted to reflect a change in meeting time proposed by Nkuchia M'ikanatha and Dr. Ostroff on Dec. 9, 2008.

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