



**DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION  
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY AT THE HILLS  
ABBOTTABAD**

**Journal Club Guidebook  
2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Year**

**2025-26**

Year

**2025-26**



Department of Medical Education				
Journal Club Guidebook				
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## 1.0 Introduction: What is a Journal Club and Why is it Important?

*This section introduces the Journal Club as a foundational exercise in evidence-based medicine, designed to cultivate critical thinking and scientific communication skills early in your medical career.*

A Journal Club is a structured meeting where students and faculty critically evaluate a recent scientific research article. In Years 2 and 3, this activity bridges your foundational science knowledge with clinical application. It is not about passive reading; it is an active process of questioning, analyzing, and determining the validity and relevance of medical research. This practice is essential for becoming a lifelong learner and an evidence-based practitioner.

## 2.0 Journal Club Frequency and Integration

*Outlines the simple schedule, showing how Journal Club is a manageable but consistent part of your curriculum, directly linked to your current modules.*

The Journal Club will be held **once per block**. This ensures regular exposure to scientific literature without overwhelming your schedule. The article will be thematically linked to the module you are studying, making your learning cohesive and relevant.

### Schedule:

- **Year 2:** One Journal Club in Blocks D, E, and F.
- **Year 3:** One Journal Club in Blocks G, H, and I.

## 3.0 Pre-Session Process: Article Selection and Student Preparation

*Details the roles and responsibilities before the session, ensuring everyone comes prepared for a productive discussion.*

Task	Responsible Party	Actions
Article Selection	Module Coordinator / Faculty Facilitator	Selects a recent (within 3-5 years), high-impact, and clinically relevant article from a reputable journal. The study design should be appropriate for the level (e.g., cohort study, RCT).
Distribution	Faculty Facilitator	Distributes the full article and a guiding appraisal worksheet to all students <b>one week</b> before the scheduled session.
Student Preparation	All Students	<b>Before the session, each student must:</b> 1. Read the article thoroughly. 2. Complete the <b>Critical Appraisal Worksheet</b> (see Section 6.1). 3. Prepare at least one question or comment for the discussion.

## 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities During the Session

*Defines the specific roles students will rotate through during the Journal Club to ensure active participation and shared responsibility.*

Role	Responsibilities
<b>Presenter (1-2 Students)</b>	Delivers a <b>10-minute summary</b> of the article, covering: the clinical question, methods, key results, and the authors' conclusion. Uses 3-4 slides maximum.
<b>Appraiser (2-3 Students)</b>	Leads the critical discussion using the appraisal worksheet. Focuses on evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the study's methodology, results, and conclusions.
<b>Discussants (All Other Students)</b>	Actively participate by asking questions, sharing their appraisals, and discussing the clinical applicability of the findings.
<b>Facilitator (Faculty)</b>	Guides the discussion, ensures it stays on track, clarifies complex methodological points, and provides an expert perspective on the article's clinical impact.

## 5.0 The Critical Appraisal Framework

*Introduces a simple, structured set of questions you will use to dissect and evaluate any research article systematically.*

You will use the following questions to guide your appraisal. Focus on these core elements appropriate for your level:

- 1. The Research Question:** Is the clinical question clear and relevant?
- 2. Study Design:** Was the appropriate study design used to answer the question?
- 3. Participants:** Who was included? Could the results apply to other patients?
- 4. Results:** What are the main findings? Are they presented clearly?
- 5. Implications:** What do the results mean for clinical practice? Should we change how we manage patients based on this?

## 6.0 Templates for Success

*Provides a ready-to-use worksheet for appraising articles and a template for the presenter's summary to standardize preparation and discussion.*

### Template 6.1: Critical Appraisal Worksheet (For Student Preparation)

*Complete this worksheet for every Journal Club article.*

Appraisal Element	Your Notes
<b>Citation:</b>	(Article Title, Authors, Journal, Date)
<b>1. What was the main clinical question or objective of the study?</b>	
<b>2. What was the study design (e.g., RCT, Cohort, Case-Control)?</b>	

3. Who were the participants? (PICO: Patients, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome)	P: I: C: O:
4. What were the ONE or TWO most important results?	
5. What was the authors' main conclusion?	
6. What is ONE strength of this study?	
7. What is ONE major limitation or weakness?	
8. How can these findings be applied to patient care in Pakistan?	

Template 6.2: Presenter's Summary Slide Template  
Use this structure for your 10-minute presentation.

- Slide 1: Title & Clinical Question
  - Article Title, Authors, Journal.
  - The "Why" – What clinical problem does this address?
- Slide 2: Methods at a Glance
  - Study Design (use a diagram if helpful).
  - PICO summary.
- Slide 3: Key Results
  - Show the 1-2 most important graphs or tables.
  - Explain what the data shows in simple terms.
- Slide 4: Conclusion & Clinical "Bottom Line"
  - Authors' conclusion.
  - Your one-sentence takeaway for doctors.

7.0 Sample Journal Club Cases for Year 2 & 3

*Provides concrete examples of the types of articles and discussion points you can expect, aligned with your block modules.*

Table 7.1: Year 2 Journal Club Case Examples

Block	Module	Sample Article Focus	Sample Discussion Points
D	Neurosciences	A cohort study linking Vitamin B12 levels to cognitive function in the elderly.	- Is this an association or causation? - Could there be other factors (confounders) affecting the result?
E	GIT / Renal	A randomized controlled trial (RCT) on a new proton-pump inhibitor vs. an old one for ulcer healing.	- Was the blinding effective? - Are the results clinically significant, not just statistically significant?

<b>F</b>	Endo / Repro	A cross-sectional study on the prevalence of PCOS in university students.	- How were the cases of PCOS defined? - Is the sample representative of all young women?
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**Table 7.2: Year 3 Journal Club Case Examples**

Block	Module	Sample Article Focus	Sample Discussion Points
<b>G</b>	Infection & Inflammation	An RCT comparing two antibiotic regimens for community-acquired pneumonia.	- What were the primary outcomes? Were they patient-important? - What about side effects and cost?
<b>H</b>	Blood & Immunology	A diagnostic accuracy study for a new, rapid test for Dengue fever.	- What was the new test compared to (the "gold standard")? - How well does the test rule-in or rule-out the disease?
<b>I</b>	CVS / RES	A meta-analysis of studies on statin therapy for primary prevention of heart attacks.	- How did the authors search for and select the studies? - Were the results consistent across all the included studies?

**8.0 Assessment and Feedback**

*Explains how your participation will be formatively assessed to encourage high-quality preparation and contribution, with a focus on learning, not just grading.*

Journal Club is a **formative assessment** activity. Your performance will be evaluated based on the following rubric and contributes to your professional development and internal assessment marks.

**Table 8.1: Journal Club Assessment Rubric**

Criterion	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)
<b>Understanding</b>	Demonstrates a clear and deep understanding of the article's purpose, methods, and findings.	Understands the key elements of the article and can explain them clearly.	Understanding of the article is incomplete or has significant inaccuracies.	Unable to explain the basic premise or findings of the article.

<b>Critical Appraisal</b>	Insightfully identifies major strengths and limitations. Questions the validity and relevance of the research.	Identifies appropriate strengths and limitations with guidance.	Struggles to move beyond summarizing to critiquing the article.	No evidence of critical analysis.
<b>Presentation &amp; Communication</b>	Presentation is clear, concise, and well-organized. Communicates complex ideas effectively.	Presentation is clear and covers the main points adequately.	Presentation is disorganized or unclear.	Presentation is not completed or is incomprehensible.
<b>Active Participation</b>	Actively engages in discussion, asks insightful questions, and builds on others' points.	Participates in the discussion and asks relevant questions.	Participation is minimal or limited to simple agreement/disagreement.	Does not participate in the discussion.

**Feedback:** The faculty facilitator will provide verbal feedback to the group at the end of the session, highlighting what was done well and areas for future improvement.

This guidebook equips you with the tools and framework to confidently participate in Journal Club. Embrace this opportunity to develop a critical eye, engage with the forefront of medical science, and lay the foundation for a practice grounded in evidence.

We wish you the best of luck in your PBL journey at CMDH!