



QI Boxset

Webinar transcript: Setting up and running a journal club

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RCVS Knowledge:

Welcome to the Quality Improvement boxset by RCVS Knowledge, a series of webinars, podcasts, and video interviews for practices and practitioners.

Pam Mosedale:

Hi everyone. Today, we're going to talk about journal clubs, setting up and running journal clubs in practice. And I'm going to talk to Sally Everitt. Sally is the inFOCUS Clinical Support Lead and chair of the review team at inFOCUS at RCVS Knowledge. So she's a great person to talk about this and also Sally, like me, has been a vet in practice for quite a long time. So Sally, journal clubs, when I've been assessing practices, when I was a Practice Standards Assessor, lots of practices have told me they'd love to run journal clubs, but they don't really know quite where to start with them. Would you be able to help them with that, do you think?

Sally Everitt:

I'll do my best Pam. What I thought I'd do is just start with some real basics, sort of the what, why and how of journal clubs. And then later on, we can go to talk about some of the resources that RCVS Knowledge has developed to help people. So let's start with what is a journal club? A journal club is an opportunity for a group of people to come together to discuss a published paper. Journal clubs were originally introduced in medical schools as a way of keeping up with new publications. They're still used in that way, especially where you have a group of people with a particular interest in a subject area or studying for a further qualification. However, most of us have limited time and therefore we have to be selective and use our time wisely by selecting papers that are going to be relevant to our practice.

Perhaps most importantly, journal clubs can be used to link research to clinical practice by encouraging critical review of the literature. So why run or participate in a journal club? The motivation for setting up a journal club will vary depending on the subject of the paper, on what the group hope to get out of the discussion. Reasons may include as a way of developing critical appraisal skills as part of evidence-based

medicine, where what we want to ensure is that our practice is based on current best evidence, as a means of assessing and disseminating information about a new procedure or medication, as a basis for discussion about current practice and how this could change in order to improve the quality of care, and to assist in the development of practice guidelines or protocols. Participating in a journal club can also contribute towards CPD and help build understanding within a team.

So how do we go about setting up a journal club? For those without experience of journal clubs, it can be difficult to know where to start, but RCVS Knowledge has produced a step-by-step guide to setting up and running a journal club. This guide gives details about things to consider when setting up a journal club, including whether it will be held face to face or online, who should be invited and how long it will last. It will also provide examples of how to facilitate a session and include some tips for success. While the term journal club is often used to refer to regular meeting to review papers, you can also use the format in more ad hoc way when you want to review some aspect of the published literature in your day to day practice. Whatever the format, it's important that your team agree on the purpose of the session and set goals and desired outcomes as a group.

In a formal setting, it's common for someone to start a session by giving a presentation about the paper. However, there's no reason why you can't have a more informal journal club and develop a format that suits you. This could involve dividing up the presentation so that different people read and present different aspects of the paper. For example, the aims, methods, data analysis, results and limitations. You can then all discuss the merits of the paper and how the findings apply to your own practice. Whatever format you choose, it's helpful to have a structure so that everyone knows what to expect and a clear idea of the aims of the session, so that you're able to make best use of the time available. Probably the most important part of running a journal club is in selecting an article that's both interesting and relevant. If the journal club is being run in a practice it can be helpful to link the paper to a current relevant topic, such as a new product or service or developing a practice protocol or guideline. Ideally the paper shouldn't be too long and it should be written in accessible language. Finally, it's important to provide the copy of the paper in good times that everyone has time to read it and think about the points they want to discuss.

Pam Mosedale:

So that, that was really interesting, Sally, thank you so much for that. And I think that'll really help practices. Another point that you mentioned all the advantages of doing a journal club. Another point is that, is something in the practice standards scheme that they're doing journal clubs... it's another thing... bit of evidence, they can show the assessors, especially in the awards, in the clinical governance award. And I really liked your tip about, choosing a paper that you might, for an area you might be using to draw up guidelines. So it's really relevant to everybody in the practice. So you said there were some resources, could you explain to us what those are?

Sally Everitt:

So as well as the guide to setting up and running a journal club, RCVS Knowledge have also produced a checklist to guide your discussion of the paper. There's a blank checklist, which you can use to help. And this is based on a critical appraisal checklist, but we've also provided some more detailed checklists for some specific papers. So the papers we've looked at so far are a randomized controlled clinical study evaluating the efficacy and safety of intertumoral treatment in canine mast cell tumors with Tigilanol tiglate, Stelfonta for those of you who started using it in practice. And as this is a completely new

treatment, we thought it'd be useful to look at a randomized controlled trial and critically appraise that. We've also got a paper on the recognition treatment monitoring of canine hypovolemic shock.

And this paper could be used as a basis of discussing of management of hypovolemic shock in dogs, in your practice. And finally at the moment, um, we've got a paper on staff attitudes to and compliance with the use of safety checklists. The intention over time is to add to this list. But we thought it might be helpful just to talk through the final one of these papers as to why we think this might be useful and how you can actually use it as part of a journal club in your practice. So this paper was published in JSAP and was also reviewed as part of inFOCUS. The paper reports on a study carried out in a university veterinary hospital, to investigate attitudes to the use of a surgical safety checklist in a small animal surgery, with the aim of gaining insight into the barriers to their use and to assess the level of completion of the checklist.

I thought this paper will be particularly relevant to practices as surgical safety checklists are widely used in human health care under attracting increasing interest in veterinary practice as a way to reduce errors relating to surgery. I'm also really aware that working in practice, there can be many barriers to implementing change, especially if that change is perceived as taking staff time and introducing more paperwork. Therefore, I thought that discussing this paper would be a useful way of looking at the benefits and potential barriers in a non-threatening way. So people can talk about other people's perceived barriers rather than having always to admit to their own. So to help you review this paper we've got a guided checklist. There are two versions of the checklist. There's the blank one, which can be given to participants to work through and fill out and a partially completed checklist, which could either be helpful just for the facilitator or given to everybody, but it doesn't replace... it helps you, but it doesn't replace reading and critically appraising paper.

The checklist, as I said, are based on a critical appraisal checklist and there are versions of these for many different types of paper in the EBVM toolkit on the RCVS Knowledge website. However, we've also added in some questions to help think about why you're reading the paper, how the findings would apply in your practice and whether having read the paper, there are any changes that you'd like to implement in your practice. For example, in this paper, the research was carried out at a single university veterinary hospital. So actually the results may not be directly applicable to other practice settings. However, the attitudes and barriers identified provide a useful focus for discussion in any practice and could still help with talking about introducing surgical checklists in your own practice.

So also we also thought about tying this in with other resources RCVS Knowledge have, because once you've read it, if you decide you do want to implement clinical checklist, RCVS Knowledge can help you there as well, um, because they have resources in the quality improvement section about checklists and there's a surgical safety checklist manual that you can work through as well as templates and case examples. And if you want to go even further than that, and then audit how you have got on with introducing a surgical safety checklist on what improvements that has done, there are also resources for clinical audit.

Pam Mosedale:

That's great to direct people to that because... Yeah, there's lots of really good QI resources there on, on the QI section of the website too. So, and the surgical safety manual that you referred to Sally has got lots of examples of checklists from different practices, so we can see which one is more applicable to their own practice.

Sally Everitt:

Yes, absolutely. And this just goes back to inFOCUS, which shows you where you can access some papers and access any of the journal club resources.

Pam Mosedale:

That's been amazing. I think, um, I think anyone watching this will have a much better idea of where to start in practice and obviously getting all the other team members motivated to get involved could be one of the barriers maybe. In my experience there's often one person who's really enthusiastic about a particular subject, like maybe checklists or some sort of, feline subject or whatever their area of interest is. But, could you recommend how you could get the others involved in this?

Sally Everitt:

Well, I think actually the journal club can be a way to do that because as you and I probably know, imposing something in practice is never going to be a success. So actually sitting people down and talking about what might be the problems can be quite difficult for people. People often don't want to say what they think it is. Whereas talking about a paper is a little bit more, one step removed. You can make it into a more theoretical objective discussion, which hopefully will help people bring out and discuss some of their issues, but perhaps in a less confrontational way, than might be the case if you were actually saying, well, why don't you want to do this?

Pam Mosedale:

That's a really good point. Yeah. That is, that is an excellent point. I think that's a really good way to look at this. And the other thing is, would you recommend they keep a record of their journal clubs?

Sally Everitt:

I think so. I mean, the checklist form gives you something to write in. It's a blank that you're meant to write it, that you're meant to fill it in. So holding onto those and you can, they're in a Word format. So you could do it online and expand to put as much information in there as you want. But as with any meeting, agreeing what your outcomes are, agreeing what actions need to be taken and a time to review them are always more likely to help you get things done than just having a meeting and walking away.

Pam Mosedale:

Yeah, no, I agree. I think recording them is important because if you're anything like me, if we've discussed something and then two years down the line, you think, Oh, I'm sure we discussed that. And it would be really nice to revisit it, wouldn't it? And if you've got... If practices keep a log somewhere, whether it be somewhere on their PMS system or somewhere on the computer or even a paper log, then it's just really useful. And it's, I would think it's really useful for new team members coming along when they start looking at the guidelines that have been drawn up and they get told well we looked at the evidence so they can look back and see what the team looked at, because all these things need updating don't they.

Sally Everitt:

And as you already said, you can use it as evidence for practice standards. You can use it, your completed base formats as part of your CPD. It definitely would fit in with CPD and reflective practice thinking about how you're going to apply this in your own practice. So it has many benefits, but I know getting started is, still feels like a big thing to do. So we're hoping that by producing these resources and giving people some papers with some guidance, it gives people a chance to try it out and then they can go on to read other papers that have particular interest to them.

Pam Mosedale:

Absolutely. I think that's a great idea to have a paper that, as you say, that you've partly started them off on. And then move on from that to others. This has been really, really useful, thank you, Sally. I'm sure everybody really appreciates it.

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