# Journal Club Handbook













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This handbook is an amended version of the Journal Club Handbook from Birmingham Women's NHS FT by kind permission of Ann Daly & Dr Amer Raza.

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#### 1. Introduction

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) integrates current best research evidence with clinical experience and thus aids decision-making in patient care.

#### 2. What is Journal Club?

Journal Club is an opportunity for clinicians to learn the principles of evidence-based practice through posing a clinical question, literature searching and critical appraisal. Additionally, it offers the opportunity to hone presentation skills and receive feedback within an informal forum.

The format of Journal Club is group, problem-based learning in which a presenter delivers a structured interactive presentation. The content of the presentation is the critical appraisal of a research paper with the option of using the CASP tool. (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme)

The aim is to challenge current practice and determine whether the research evidence supports a change in practice. Appraisal is continued by the group discussion which follows and may conclude by determining whether or not current practice should be altered in light of the presenter's findings.

# 3. How is Journal Club organised?

Journal Club will run twice monthly: Tuesday and Friday lunchtime from 1.00pm to 2.00pm. (Check schedule on the back page.) A rota will be available with the dates members are presenting. A list of dates for presentation and an attendance sheet will be at each meeting. Presenters can choose whether or not to have others assess their presentation. A standardized assessment form is provided which can be uploaded onto their e-portfolio.

#### 4. Guidance for the Presenter

There are five stages to follow:

- 1. Identify a knowledge gap and frame a clinical question
- 2. Literature search to answer that question
- 3. Select a paper and appraise it using CASP
- 4. Email the paper details to the library for distribution to club members
- 5. Prepare the presentation and present the findings at Journal Club
- 6. Email a copy of your presentation to the library to be uploaded on the website.

#### Journal Club Flowchart.

Clinical Encounter Formulate a structured clinical question Population Intervention Search for Evidence Systematic review RCT/Cohort study Cross sectional study Qualitative research Select best Evidence Relevant focussed question Relevant focussed question Up to date Critically Appraise CASP Journal Club

# 4.1 Identify a knowledge gap and frame a clinical question

The first step in EBM is to define a structured clinical question. The question should arise from clinical practice. Using the PICO acronym will help you organize your query into a searchable question. In addition to the PICO elements of your clinical question, it's important to know: —

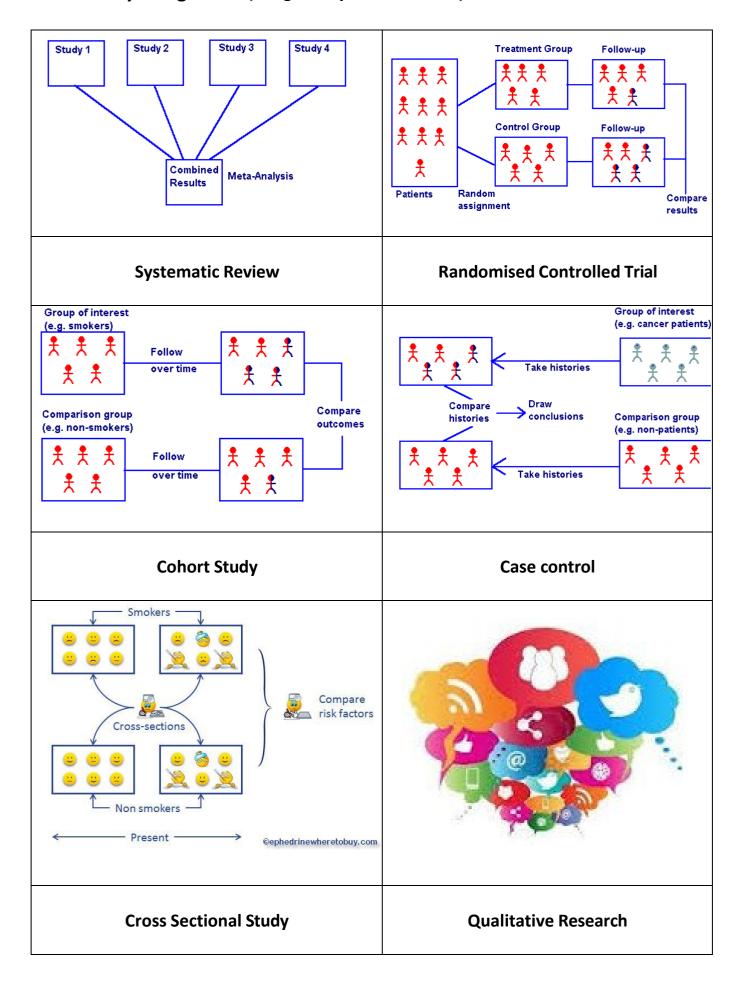
- what TYPE of question you are asking
- what is the best STUDY DESIGN to search for in order to find evidence that answers your clinical question.

# P.I.C.O. Model for Clinical Questions

P	Patient or Population	How would I describe a group of patients similar to mine
-	Intervention	Which main intervention, prognostic factor, or exposure am I considering?
С	Comparison	What is the main alternative to compare with the intervention? (if applicable)
0	Outcome	What can I hope to accomplish measure, improve or affect?
D	Type of question and study design	Therapy/Treatment, Diagnosis, Prognosis, Harm / Aetiology. What would be the best study design?

Structured PICO question	Type of question & study design	
In children with a moderate to severe asthma exacerbation (P), does Atrovent (C) added to salbutamol (I) reduce the rate of admission (O)?	Therapy RCT	
Among children with minor head injury (P) does the use of CT scan (I) versus other clinical findings (C) affect identification and diagnosis of intracranial hemorrhage (O)?	Diagnosis Cross sectional study	
In children who were born full-term with normal birth weight (P), is maternal infection (I) a possible cause of congenital cerebral palsy (O)?	Etiology/Harm Cohort Studies	
Among toddlers with recurrent nasal discharge (P) does the use of antibiotics (I) affect the probability of recurrence (O)?	Prognosis Cohort Study Case Control Study	

# Some Study Designs ..... (see glossary for definitions)



#### 4.2 Literature search for best evidence to answer the question

The second stage in EBM is a literature search to identify a study that will help answer the question. When searching for evidence use terms identified in PICO and consider an appropriate research design (RCT, cohort study etc).

# A literature search may include:

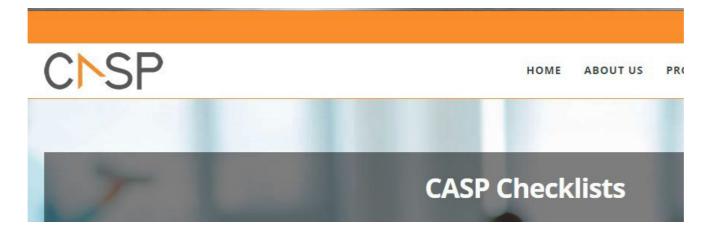
- NHS Knowledge & Library Hub and electronic databases: Medline, Embase, Cinahl, Cochrane database
- Hand search of journals
- Grey literature: reports (government or academic), conference proceedings, internet, libraries, professional societies, Kings Fund, Nuffield
- Research registers: National Research Register, HTA database, Cochrane
- Retrieved articles: bibliographies, search authors names, citation threads
- Contact with researchers or "experts"

Ideally, evidence-based clinical practice guidelines relevant to your question will already exist. When this is not the case you need to seek out the best scientific evidence available to help inform the treatment decision.

See the Finding Information section of the Illingworth Library website <a href="https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/illingworth-library/finding-and-requesting-information/">https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/illingworth-library/finding-and-requesting-information/</a>

# 4.3 Appraise the evidence

The next stage is to critically appraise the selected study. This can be made easier by using an appraisal tool. **CASP** - a tool that can be used for all types of question is the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme available at <a href="https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/">https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/</a>



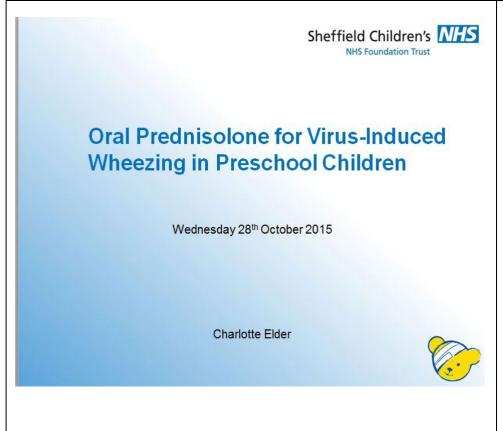
# 4.4 Email the paper

At least one week before presentation send the chosen paper to illingorth.library@nhs.net for distribution to club members.

# 4.5 Prepare the presentation

The PowerPoint presentation should last no more than 30 minutes to allow time for discussion.

The following slides are an example of what should be included.



Greet the audience, introduce yourself and the topic of the presentation



Aim

To determine the efficacy of oral prednisolone in reducing the duration of hospitalisation for preschool wheezing children



The aim is what you want to achieve e.g. to determine if one therapy is better than another.



# **Objectives**

- Search for literature relevant to question
- Select useful paper to discuss
- Determine validity and reliability of paper in answering question
- Assess whether clinical practice need change

The objectives are how to achieve the aim.

There is typically one aim and two or three objectives





# Case presentation

- An 18-month old girl is admitted to the paediatric ward with increased work of breathing and wheeze. She has been unwell with coryzal symptoms for 3 days.
- She requires 2-hourly bronchodilators. You wonder whether the addition of a short course of oral steroids would lead to a faster recovery than bronchodilators alone.

Provide a brief case presentation, which typically identifies the case that gives rise to the question being presented or why this question/topic is of particular interest.



#### The Clinical Question

Population	Preschool children with viral wheeze
Intervention	Short course of oral prednisolone
Comparison	placebo
Outcome	Reduce hospitalization
Design	Randomised, double-bind, placebo controlled trial

Provide a clear and concise clinical question and identify the PICO facets.



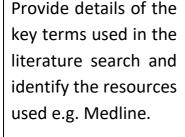


#### Literature Search

[wheeze OR viral wheeze OR viral respiratory infection] AND [orals steroids OR corticosteroids OR prednisolone]. Limited to [Infant AND Preschool child AND English language]

Resources Searched:

Medline, Embase, Cochrane Library



Provide details of the results of the search e.g. 4 RCTs were found in Medline.



Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust

# Oral Prednisolone for Preschool Children with Acute Virus-Induced Wheezing

Panickar J., Lakhanpaul M., Lambert P.C., Kenia P., Stephenson T., Smyth A., Grigg J.

New England Journal of Medicine 2009; 360(4): 329-338



Provide bibliographic details of the paper selected and state why this paper was chosen e.g. the most relevant paper, up to date, adequate participant numbers, good methodology etc.



# Current practice/guidelines

- Varied practice....
- Use of 3-5 days prednisolone
- Parent initiated therapy
- Based on asthma Mx
- Preschool viral wheeze different?
- SCH guidelines updated in 2010



Provide details of NICE and SCH guidelines (where available)

Identify issues of concern e.g. guidelines unclear, outdated and/or unspecific to answer question being presented.



#### Methods

- March 2005 August 2007
- 3 UK hospitals
- 10-60 months of age with Dr diagnosed VIW
- · Exclusion criteria:
  - Shock, sepsis, CHD, ID, VZV
- Preschool Respiratory Assessment Measure (PRAM)
- Treatment in accordance with BTS guidelines (2003)
- Diary cards for recording respiratory symptoms



Sheffield Children's NHS

**NHS Foundation Trust** 

Copy and paste u

Describe the study to

understanding of the

methods used.

the audience to help get

a feel of the content and

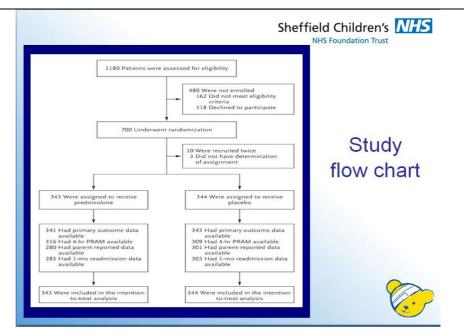
#### Outcome measures

- Primary
  - Duration of hospitalisation
- Secondary
  - PRAM scores 4, 12, 24 hours
  - Total salbutamol whilst hospitalised
  - Mean 7-day symptom score
  - Mean salbutamol at home during 7-days
  - Time to be "back to normal"
  - Readmission with wheeze within 1/12

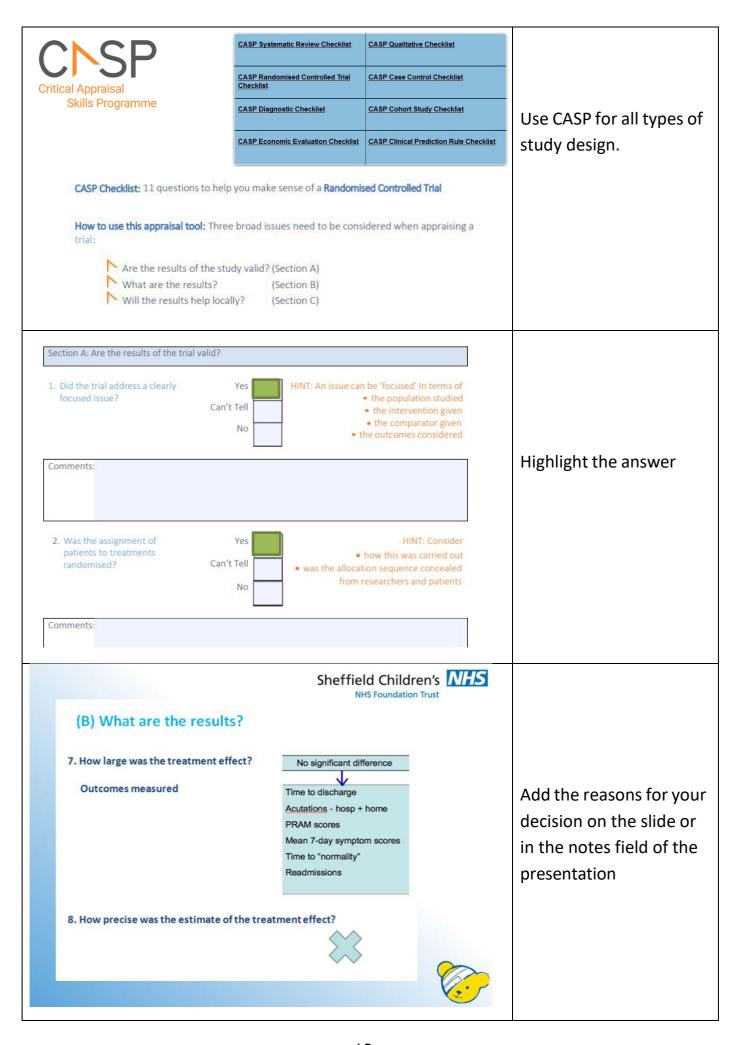


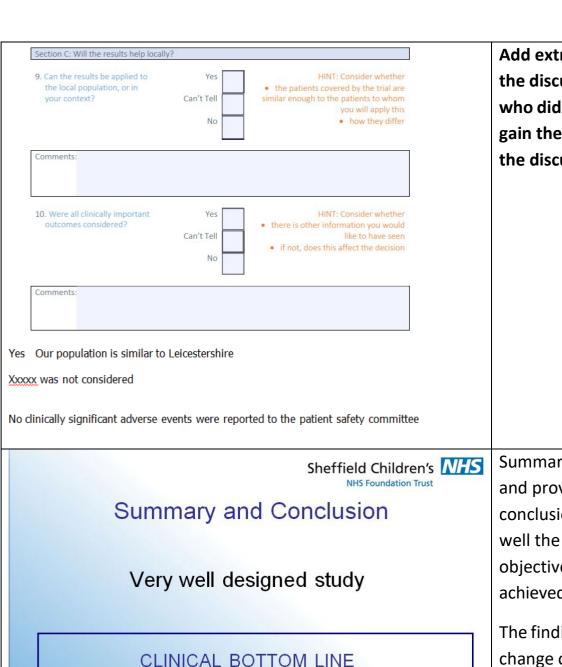
Copy and paste useful charts or tables from the study paper, and explain their significance to the audience.

This might need more than one slide.



Provide a simple flow chart of the study.





- Steroids don't have role in Mx of preschool VIW

Add extra notes after the discussion so those who did not attend can gain the benefit from the discussion

Summarise the findings and provide a conclusion, stating how well the aims and objectives were achieved.

The findings may prompt change of policy at SCH.

Thank the audience and take questions.



# 4.6 Present the findings at Journal Club

# 4.6.1. The role of the presenter:

- Choose the clinical question either from an area of interest (nothing too esoteric please!) or from a list of suggestions held by the library.
- Ensure the paper is circulated to members at least a week before Journal Club. (Email paper to <a href="mailto:illingworth.library@nhs.net">illingworth.library@nhs.net</a> for distribution)
- Arrive in time to set up the presentation to enable a timely start
- Keep to time presentation to be no longer than 30 minutes
- Arrange feedback if wanted (see page 18 for proforma for assessment)
- Hopefully the papers chosen will spark discussion and possibly controversy. The aim is not to select "the perfect paper" but about appraising what evidence is available – even if it is fundamentally flawed.
- Email a copy of your presentation to Sarah Massey to be uploaded on the website.

# 4.6.2. The role of non-presenting members:

- To arrive promptly
- To have read the paper beforehand (emailed by Sarah Massey 1 week before)
- To participate in discussion
- To take their turn presenting

#### 4.6.3. The role of the clinical librarian

- The librarian is available to help with the literature search and selection of a paper and will email it out one week before presentation.
- The library staff will set up the computer equipment prior to each Journal Club
- Will complete feedback on the presentation if requested.
- Will upload the presentation to library website.

# 4.7 Presentation follow-up

- As soon as possible after the journal club, amend the presentation if necessary to include points made during the discussion
- Email a copy of the presentation to illingworth.library@nhs.net for uploading on the website

# 4.8. Frequently asked questions

#### What if I can't present on the allocated day?

Request a fellow presenter switch days. Please inform the chairperson for that session and Sarah Massey

#### Can I invite others to my Journal Club presentation?

Yes, invite members of staff that you feel are interested in the topic of the presentation and that might contribute to the discussion. Interested non-medical staff are also welcome.

#### Who assesses the presenter and how?

If the presenter wishes to be assessed, the clinical librarian fills in the assessment form. A copy can be found on page 18 of the booklet.

# 5. Recommended reading (\* are in stock at Illingworth Library)

- \*Aveyard H (2017) A beginner's guide to evidence-based practice in health and social care professions 3rd ed OUP.
- \*Bootland, D. (2017) Critical appraisal from papers to patient. CRC Press.
- \*Howlett, B. (2020) Evidence based practice for health professionals : an interprofessional approach. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Jones & Bartlett Learning
- \*Gosall N.K. and Gosal, G.S. (2015). The doctor's guide to critical appraisal. 4tg ed. PasTest.
- \*Greenhalgh T. (2019). How to read a paper: the basics of evidence-based medicine. Wiley-Blackwell.
- \*Moule,P. (2018) Making sense of research in nursing, health and social care. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Sage.



See also the website of the Centre for Evidence Based Medicine: <a href="http://www.cebm.net/">http://www.cebm.net/</a>

# 6. Glossary

**Absolute risk:** measures the probability of an event or outcome occurring (e.g. an adverse reaction to the drug being tested) in the group under study.

**Absolute risk reduction (ARR):** the ARR is the difference in the risk of an event occurring between two groups, for example, if 6% of patients die after receiving a new experimental drug and 10% of patients die after having the existing drug treatment then the ARR is 10% - 6% = 4%. Therefore, by using the new drug 4% of patients can be prevented from dying.

**Allocation concealment:** to be effective, the process for randomisation must ensure that no one involved in the study can influence the group each patient is allocated to. Allocation concealment is best achieved by using a centralised computer allocation process.

**Bias:** influences on a study that can lead to invalid conclusions about a treatment, which can make that treatment appear better or worse than it is. Bias can occur by chance or as a result of a systematic error on the design and execution of a study. It can occur at different stages in the research process, for example, in the collection, analysis, interpretation or publication of research data.

**Blinding:** the practice of keeping the subjects and / or the investigators of a study ignorant of the group to which a subject has been assigned. For example, a trial in which both the patients and doctors are unaware of whether the patients are taking the experimental or control drugs. The purpose of blinding is to protect against bias. See also double blind, single blind and triple blind study.

Case control study: a study that starts with the identification of a group of individuals sharing the same characteristics (e.g. people with a particular disease) and a suitable comparison / control group) (e.g. people without the disease). All subjects are then assessed with respect to things that happened in the past that might be related to contracting the disease under. These studies are also called retrospective as they look back in time from the outcome to the possible causes.

**Cohort study:** an observational study that takes a group (cohort) of patients and follows their progress over time in order to measure outcomes such as disease or mortality rates, and make comparisons according to the treatments that patients received. Cohorts can be assembled in the present and followed into the future (a concurrent or prospective cohort study) or identified from past records and followed forward from that time up to the present.

**Confidence interval:** a way of expressing certainty about the findings from a study using statistical measures. A confidence interval describes the range within which the true value of a measurement (e.g. effect of a treatment) is expected to lie within a given degree of certainty. It is usual to interpret a 95% confidence interval as the range of effects within which we are 95% confident that the true effect lies.

**Confounding factor:** a factor that influences a study that can contribute to misleading findings. For example: two groups of people, one exercising regularly the other not (the groups have a significant age difference but this is not reported), in relation to cardiovascular events the outcomes are influenced as much by age as exercising. Age is therefore the confounding factor.

**Control group:** a group of patients recruited to a study that receives no treatment, a treatment of known effect or a placebo - in order to provide a comparison for a group receiving an experimental treatment, such as a new drug.

**Controlled clinical trial (CCT):** a study testing a specific drug or other treatment involving two or more groups of patients with the same disease. One (the experimental group) receives the treatment that is being tested and the other (the comparison or control group) receives an alternative treatment, a placebo or no treatment. The two groups are followed to compare differences in outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the experimental treatment.

**Cross sectional study:** the observation of a defined set of people at a single point in time - a snapshot. This type of study contrasts with a longitudinal study which follows subjects over a period of time.

**Double blind study:** a study in which both the subject (patient) and the observer (investigator/clinician) is unaware of which treatment or intervention the patient is receiving. The purpose of this blinding is to protect against bias.

**Event rate:** the proportion of patients in a group where a specified health event or outcome is observed. For example, if in 100 patients the event is observed in 23, then event rate is 0.23. Control event rate (CER) and experimental event rate (EER) are the terms used in control and experimental groups of patients.

**Heterogeneity:** when the results or estimates of effects of treatment from separate studies appear to be different.

**Homogeneity:** when the results from separate studies are similar. Information bias: pertinent to all types of study and can be caused by poorly designed questionnaires, observer or interviewer bias, response and measurement error.

**Intention to treat analysis:** an analysis of a clinical trial where patients are analysed according to the group to which they were initially randomly allocated, regardless of whether or not they had dropped out, fully complied with the treatment or crossed over and received the alternative treatment. Intention to treat analysis are favoured in assessments of clinical effectiveness as they mirror the non-compliance and treatment changes that are likely to occur when the treatment is used in practice.

**Meta analysis:** results from a collection of independent studies (investigating the same treatment) are pooled using statistical techniques to synthesise their findings into a single estimate of treatment effect.

**Number needed to treat (NNT):** this measures the impact of a treatment or intervention. It states how many patients need to be treated in order to prevent an event which would otherwise occur. For example, if the NNT = 3 then three patients would have to be treated to prevent one adverse outcome. The closer the NNT is to 1, the better the treatment is. The number needed to harm (NNH) is the number of patients that would need to receive a treatment to cause one additional adverse event, for example, if the NNH = 4 then four patients would have to be treated for one bad outcome to occur.

**Observational study:** a research method that involves watching, listening and recording behaviours and actions.

**Odds ratio (OR):** odds are a way of representing probability that provides an estimate (usually with a confidence interval) for the effect of a treatment. Odds are used to convey the idea of risk and an odds ratio of 1 between two treatment groups implies that the risk of an adverse outcome is the same in each group.

**P value:** the P value is a measure of probability that a difference between groups happened by chance. It has a value ranging from zero to one. For example, P= 0.01 means that if there is a 1 in 100 chance that the result occurred by chance. The lower the P value, the more likely it is that the difference between groups was caused by treatment. P values tell us whether an effect can be regarded as statistically significant or not, it does not relate to how large the effect might be, for which we need the confidence interval. A P value of <0.05 indicates that a result is likely to be real (rather than happened by chance).

**Performance bias:** the systematic difference in care provided (apart for the intervention). For example carers treating patients differently according to which group they are in.

**Prospective study:** a study in which subjects are entered into research and then followed up over a period of time with future events recorded as they happen.

**Publication bias:** studies with statistically significant (or positive) results are more likely to be published than those with non significant (or negative) results.

**Qualitative research:** research used to explore and understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviour and interactions.

**Quantitative research:** research that generates numerical data. Randomisation: a method that uses the play of chance to assign subjects to groups in a research study, for example, by using a random numbers table or a computer generated random sequence.

Randomised controlled trial (RCT): a study to test a specific drug or other treatment in which subjects are randomly assigned to two or more groups: one (the experimental group) receiving the treatment that is being tested and the other (the comparison or control group) receiving an alternative treatment, a placebo or no treatment. The two groups are followed to compare differences in outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the experimental treatment.

**Relative risk (RR):** a summary measure that represents the ratio of the risk of a given event or outcome (e.g. an adverse reaction to the drug being tested) in one group of subjects compared with another. When the risk of events is the same in the two groups the relative risk is one. In a study comparing two treatments, a relative risk of two would indicate that patients receiving one of the treatments had twice the risk of an adverse outcome than those receiving the other treatment.

**Relative risk reduction (RRR):** tells us the reduction in the rate of the event in the treatment group relative to the rate in the control group. RRR is probably the most commonly reported measure of treatment effects.

**Retrospective study:** a study that deals with the present / past and does not involve studying future events.

**Risk ratio:** ratio of the risk of an undesirable event or outcome occurring in a group of patients receiving experimental treatment compared with a comparison (control) group.

**Selection bias:** selection bias occurs if the characteristics of the sample group differ from those of the wider population or when there are systematic differences between comparison groups of patients in a study in terms of prognosis or responsiveness to treatment.

**Sensitivity:** in diagnostic testing sensitivity refers to the chance of having a positive test result given that you have the disease. 100% sensitivity means that all those with the disease will test positive, but this is not the same the other way around. A patient could have a positive test result but not have the disease - this is called a false positive. The sensitivity of a test is also related to its negative predictive value (true negatives) - a test with a sensitivity of 100% means that all those who get a negative test result will not have the disease. **Single blind study:** a study in which either the subject or the observer is not aware of which treatment or intervention the subject is receiving.

**Specificity:** in diagnostic testing specificity refers to the chance of having a negative test result given that you do not have the disease. 100% specificity means that all those without the disease will test negative, but this is not the same the other way around. A patient could have a negative test result but still have the disease - this is called a false negative. The specificity of a test is also related to its positive predictive value (true positives) - a test with a specificity of 100% means that all those having a positive test result definitely have the disease.

**Systematic review:** a review in which evidence from studies has been identified, appraised and synthesised in a methodical way according to a predetermined criteria.

# **Criteria for assessing Journal Club presenters**

Name of presenter	
Date of presentation	
Name of Chair	
Question/topic	
Study selected	

#### 1. Were the following slides included in the presentation?

- A clear question
- Aims and objectives
- A case report/context of the question
- Literature search (databases / PICO / search terms)
- Details of any Guidelines relating to the study
- Bibliographic details of the paper selected
- A flow chart of the study / details of the study
- Appraisal of the study using the GATE frame
- A summary / conclusion

2. Quality of the presentation

please tick	excellent	good	adequate	bad
Clear communication				
Good use of media				
Interactive				
A positive response to comment / criticism				

# 3. Did the presenter put enough time and effort into the presentation?

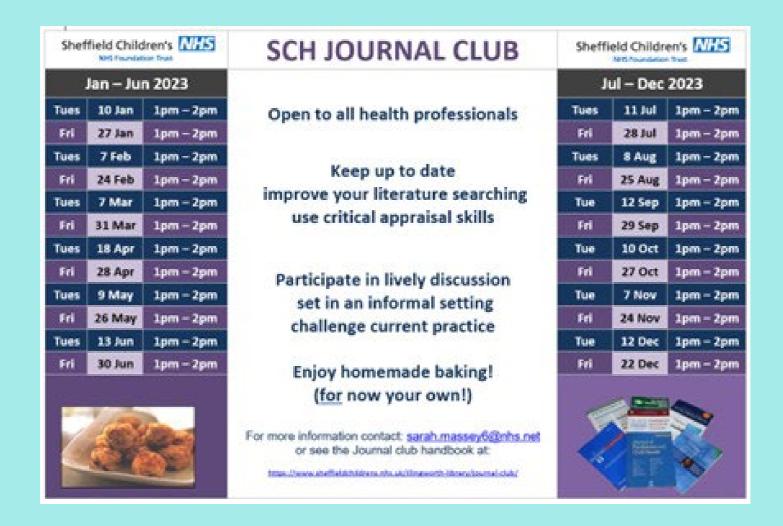
please tick			
Good time & effort	Just enough	More of both needed	

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Good knowledge	Poor knowledge
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# 2023



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