

Developing a Journal Club at Your Institution

Susan K. Steele-Moses, DNS, APRN, AOCN®

Beginning with this issue of the *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*, one article will be identified as a good reference for analysis in your journal club. This issue, the article chosen by the editor is “Quality of Life and Exercise: Strengthening the Connections” (Hacker, 2009; see pp. 31–39). If you don’t already have a journal club at your institution, this month’s Evidence-Based Practice column provides helpful hints on how to get one started.

Setting Up a Journal Club at Your Institution

First, determine why you want to develop a journal club. Do you want to develop a journal club to meet criteria for Magnet status (Atkinson, Turkel, & Cashy, 2008; “Certification for Accreditation Program and Magnet Recognition Program,” 2008; Murray, 2008; Reigle et al., 2008; Wolf, Triolo, & Ponte, 2008). Does the nursing staff have a genuine interest in staying abreast of clinical practice? A journal club likely will be more successful if it is of interest to you and your staff rather than if it is developed purely to meet a national standard.

Next, determine what support resources are available in your organization to help you develop and implement a journal club. Most organizations enlist the assistance of support resources such as the hospital librarian, advanced practice nurses, staff development educators, nursing leaders, and members of the Nursing Research Council (Grossman & Hooton, 1993; Reigle et al., 2008; Schwartz & Iobst, 2008; Wolf et al., 2008).

Before you get started, determine the scope of the nursing journal club as well as any logistical issues that might affect its success. Do you want to have the journal club for oncology nurses exclusively, or will you consider inviting other nurses to attend? How often and where will you meet? Is the location of the journal club close to the nursing unit, or will the nurses have to leave the unit to participate? Are the size and set-up of the room conducive to audience participation? As you select a location, consider whether you will have audiovisual support resources, such as a laptop computer, projection system, and Internet connectivity. If you decide to keep your journal club more informal, then limiting the use of technology may promote a less threatening environment for participants (Dobrzanska & Cromack, 2005; Griffith, Larkin, Cierpial, Gettings, & Capasso, 2007; Sierpina, 1999).

What day of the week is best to schedule the journal club? How will you ensure that the night and weekend staffs also have access to the information? Most hospitals find that set days and times promote attendance (Griffith et al., 2007). Lunchtime activities or time set aside at the end of a shift may be workable options for your clinical setting (Carroll-Johnson, 2005). Accordingly, the Lee Memorial Health System ascribes to multiple journal club formats to meet the needs of its diverse nursing workforce. Lee Memorial has designed journal clubs around

specific clinical content and research methods and even has one specifically for the night shift staff (Lee Memorial Health System, 2008).

After you determine when and where your journal club will meet, determine how long each session will be. Length may depend on the location of the meeting, how long the nurses can be off the unit to attend, and support resources available. If you anticipate awarding continuing nursing education credit through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), one credit hour is equal to 60 minutes of an organized activity, either didactic or experiential (ANCC). The minimum number of contact hours to be awarded by ANCC is 0.5 (30 contact minutes). The Oncology Nursing Society is an approved provider of ANCC contact hours (Oncology Nursing Society, n.d.a) as may be your state nurses association or local university. A list of accredited providers is available on the ANCC Web site to assist you in obtaining contact education credits for nurses who attend your journal club meetings (ANCC, 2008). You may want to start at 30 minutes and build to 60 once you have momentum established, your audience matures, and additional support is available. Even if you decide not to award contact hours for your journal club meetings, keep track of who attends as well as who leads discussions (Carroll-Johnson, 2005).

What type of article will you select: an article that focuses primarily on research,

Susan K. Steele-Moses, DNS, APRN, AOCN®, is an oncology clinical nurse specialist and a program director of nursing research at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center in Baton Rouge, LA.

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