A RECOMMENDED JOURNAL CLUB FORMAT
(From Dr. Deb Grady)

I. Background, Context, & Motivation

II. Research Question

III. Design
   (e.g., prospective, double-blind, randomized, parallel, captopril-controlled clinical trial)

IV. Subjects
   A. Inclusion criteria
   B. Exclusion criteria
   C. Sampling (number of centers, etc.)

V. Measurements
   A. Predictor variables
   B. Outcomes (including primary, secondary, others)

VI. Follow-up
   How often and how long

VII. Analysis
   (Eg, survival analysis with log rank test; intent-to-treat)

VIII. Findings
   Tables, graphs
   Highlight key results

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The following guidelines are from the JAMA series on Users' Guides to the Medical Literature. References:


Guyatt GH et al. Users’ guides to the medical literature: II: How to use an article about therapy or prevention. A: Are the results of the study valid? JAMA 1993;270(21):2598-2601.

Guyatt GH et al. Users’ guides to the medical literature: II: How to use an article about therapy or prevention. B: What were the results and will they help me in caring for my patients? JAMA 1994;271(1):59-63.
Readers’ Guides for an Article About Therapy

- Are the results of the study valid?
  - Was the assignment of patients to treatments randomized?
  - Were all pts who entered the trial properly accounted for and attributed at its conclusion? Was follow-up complete? Were pts analyzed in the groups to which they were randomized?
  - Were patients, health workers, and study personnel blind to treatment?
  - Were the groups similar at the start of the trial?
  - Aside from the experimental intervention, were the groups treated equally?

- What were the results?
  - How large was the treatment effect?
  - How precise was the estimate of the treatment effect?

- Will the results help me in caring for my patients?
  - Can the results be applied to my patient care?
  - Were all clinically important outcomes considered?
  - Are the likely treatment benefits worth the potential harms and costs?

Evaluating and Applying the Results of Studies of Diagnostic Tests

- Are the results of the study valid?
  - Was there an independent, blind comparison with a reference standard?
  - Did the patient sample include an appropriate spectrum of patients to whom the diagnostic test will be applied in clinical practice?
  - Did the results of the test being evaluated influence the decision to perform the reference standard?
  - Were the methods for performing the test described in sufficient detail to permit replication?

- What were the results?
  - Are likelihood ratios for the test presented or data necessary for their calculation provided?

- Will the results help me in caring for my patients?
○ Will the reproducibility of the test result and its interpretation be satisfactory in my setting?
○ Are the results applicable to my patient?
○ Will the results change my management?
○ Will patients be better off as a result of the test?

Users’ Guides to an Article About Harm
• Are the results of the study valid?
  ○ Were there clearly identified comparison groups that were similar with respect to important determinants of outcome, other than the one of interest?
  ○ Were the outcomes and exposures measured in the same way in the groups being compared?
  ○ Was follow-up sufficiently long and complete?
  ○ Is the temporal relationship correct?
  ○ Is there a dose-response gradient?
• What are the results?
  ○ How strong is the association between exposure and outcome?
  ○ How precise is the estimate of risk?
• Will the results help me in caring for my patients?
  ○ Are the results applicable to my practice?
  ○ What is the magnitude of the risk?
  ○ Should I attempt to stop the exposure?

Users’ Guides to an Article About Prognosis
• Are the results of the study valid?
  ○ Was there a representative and well-defined sample of patients at a similar point in the course of the disease?
  ○ Was follow-up sufficiently long and complete?
  ○ Were objective and unbiased outcome criteria used?
  ○ Was there adjustment for important prognostic factors?
• What are the results?
  ○ How large is the likelihood of the outcome event(s) in a specified period of time?
  ○ How precise are the estimates of the likelihood?
• Will the results help me in caring for my patients?
  ○ Were the study patients similar to my own?
  ○ Will the results lead directly to selecting or avoiding therapy?
  ○ Are the results useful for reassuring or counseling patients?