Medical Students’ Perspective on TBI after Participation in Interactive Evidence-Based Online Learning

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ABSTRACT
The Cochrane Students’ Journal Club is an online learning journal club which aims at creating a secondary learning resource for gathering and appraising evidence. This article illustrates an example of how an interactive discussion, on the use of anti-epileptic drugs for the prevention of seizures in patients with acute traumatic brain injury, can be used by students to formulate a plan for managing such patients in actual clinical practice.

Keywords: Anti-Epileptics, Evidence-Based Medicine, Head Trauma, Interactive Student Medicine, Neuroplasticity, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

INTRODUCTION
With access to articles in scientific publications being governed by variables such as affordability, institutional support and estimated need, there is a lack of a universal accessibility to research studies. In order to circumvent this barrier, a group of students got together and decided to use existing resources to disseminate evidence-based learning. The Cochrane Students’ Journal club (CSJC, http://csjconline.informer.org.in/) was the first online journal club set up keeping in mind the needs of medical students in emerging regions of the South Asia region.

The online journal club aims to incorporate the knowledge sharing of a traditional journal club and uses the accessibility of a web interface to transmit it across a diverse geographic base (Chandra, Shah, & Sriganesh, 2011).

The journal club is moderated by a group of students and recent medical graduates who aim to keep the standards of evidence used high, by using only systematic reviews. They aim to keep the discussion simple such that even a first year medical student can understand the methodology. In addition to the monthly discussions, the journal club’s website also consists of a knowledge base which explains research and evidence related concepts to those students who are unfamiliar with them (Figure 1).
In the current article, we provide a perceptual evaluation of the how students view such a learning experience.

Like traditional journal clubs, the online journal club chooses a specific topic for discussion each month. Using a clinical case, the moderators initiate discussion and it is the task of the students participating to frame an appropriate search strategy to find a systematic review which answers the questions posed with the case vignette. The Cochrane collaboration’s database of systematic reviews is available at little or no cost to countries in the South Asia region. This makes it easy to access the entire text of the reviews for learning exercises such as the journal club. The students search within the Cochrane database for relevant meta-analytical studies (both protocols and reviews) and identify and isolate the review which best answers the questions posed in the clinical stem. In addition, students are encouraged to inculcate critiquing skills and assess the quality of available evidence and also the methodology of the review in addition to the clinical parameters. At set checkpoints, the journal club puts up a standard reference of the search strategy and the appraisal, done by subject experts for students to assess and assimilate their knowledge. In this manner, students are encouraged to develop a scientific temperament in a mentor-supervised environment. Figure 2 outlines the schedule followed by the journal club.

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**Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of the various roles of the members in the online journal club. The club provides an interactive platform for students and subject experts to discuss the various aspects of a clinically relevant topic. (*Subject expert is a prominent authority with a significant experience in the topic chosen for discussion and/or a strong research methodological background. They are approached by the journal club’s moderators for each monthly discussion and play an important role in mentored-learning as well as in appraising the review. **Moderator is a part of the journal club’s administration who micromanages the flow of information between the subject expert and the participants (students). The moderator ensures that the journal club’s timeline is adhered to and sets the pace for the journal club discussion by inviting students to participate by displaying the topic on various social networking forums and communicating to various student groups. ***Student refers to the participants of the journal club or the target audience. The student is generally from the medical, dental or allied health fields. However, any individual who participates in the journal club to enhance his/her knowledge comes under this category).**
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