

## Palliative Care Journal Club: Guide to Presenting Articles

You are NOT expected to make write-ups/powerpoints but you are welcome to if you think it will be helpful. Do bring 10 copies of your study to handout. We want to hear an intelligent, critical perspective but you don't need to understand all the in's and out's of the statistics etc. Basically: come with something interesting to say! Contact me with all questions, concerns: [smarks@mcw.edu](mailto:smarks@mcw.edu)

### I) Why did you choose the article? What are you hoping to accomplish by presenting it?

- Prompted by a specific clinical scenario or patient?
- New information about an important clinical issue?
- Wondering if we should be changing/improving our practice?
- Personal interest? General palliative care knowledge? This is new and interesting?

### II) Summarize the article and its findings

#### a) Introduction

- a. What were the authors' primary intent? What question were they motivated to answer?
- b. Give us basic summary information about the article: "This was a prospective cohort study to see if X was associated with Y"

#### b) Methods

- a. Summarizing the methods is really important: what your audience wants to know is the following two things and the methods let us know this:
- b. *Who were these patients in the study* (i.e. are they like our patients)? Where did the trial take place? What sort of inclusion and exclusion criteria? How were these defined? How were patients identified? How sick were they?
- c. *What did the researchers do?* For intervention studies we need a good sense of what actually was done to the subjects and when. For non-intervention studies we need to know how was the data collected? How did the researchers define their terms and categorize data (e.g. how did they define "worsening pain" or "terminally ill")? How did they get this data? From where?
- d. In intervention trials: what is the primary outcome? Did they do power calculations to see if the N was adequate?

#### c) Results

- a. Go over the Table 1 with patient demographic characteristics—again with an eye to letting us know whether they are similar to our patients
- b. Summarize the results whatever they may be
  - i. In intervention trials: are the results significant and even if statistically significant are they clinically significant? What are the magnitude of the results? NNTs are helpful here.
  - ii. Highlight unexpected or supporting secondary findings but you don't need to present every little finding if secondary or uninteresting
- c. Articles often have confusing tables—walk us through important tables or graphs

#### d) Discussion

- a. Discuss limitations of the research: generalizability, methodologic issues, etc.\*\*See Attachments/Appendices
- b. Are the results meaningful to our practice or patients? In what way? Is this actionable research?
- c. What are next steps? What further questions does this prompt?

**III) Attachments:** below are tables which present tips on critically appraising different types of research articles. The above is a format for your presentation—below are guidelines to help you critically analyze the articles. Use them to prompt your analysis/guide your thinking but you don't have to go through these like a checklist (Please don't—it's boring). Many palliative care articles are qualitative and these analysis guidelines aren't pertinent to those. The attached pdf's are more in-depth descriptions of clinical trial design and statistical analysis.