

## Twitter Journal Club – a novel application of social media

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I first joined Twitter in 2010 as a procrastination exercise during my medical finals and mainly to follow Ben Goldacre and other science types on there who sparked my interest. Soon I found myself part of a community of medical students and doctors on Twitter and I could soon see the value in engaging with social media. In the summer of 2011 a chance conversation with a Cambridge medical student Fiona Douglas ended up with an interesting question, could we use Twitter to discuss journal articles? (Silvey & Watkin, 2013)

A week later Twitter Journal Club had been formed. The first of its kind, it took the traditional journal club format to Twitter, allowing participants who have never met in person to discuss a clinical paper. The first paper discussed was *"Early Goal-Directed Therapy in the Treatment of Severe Sepsis and Septic Shock"* (Rivers et al., 2001). By using the hashtag *"#twitic"*, participants were able to group posts together, and follow the discussion of the paper. Acting as a facilitator tweeting from the journal club account I guided participants through the paper using critical appraisal guidelines. I was amazed as more and

more people joined in, and the standard of the discussion was incredibly high.

After the success of the first week, the journal club has met over 24 times, discussing papers covering a range of specialties including critical care medicine, paediatrics, patient safety, cardiology, endocrinology and HIV medicine. The @twitjournalclub account currently has over 3,000 followers and the journal club runs roughly fortnightly, each time appraising a different clinical paper.

The format is simple. A paper is chosen and a summary posted on the journal club website [www.twitjc.com](http://www.twitjc.com) with discussion points. The discussion runs at 8pm on a Sunday evening, participants use the hashtag to follow the discussion and add in their own views on each discussion points.

The journal club has proved to be a success, allowing a wider range of participants than a traditional journal club, of all grades and specialties, and encourages engagement between trainees and senior clinicians alike. Authors of papers being discussed have participated in Twitter Journal Club, notably Prof. Kathryn Maitland (FEAST) and Prof. Atul Gawande (WHO Surgical Safety Checklist). Feedback from participants has been incredibly positive and included:

*"An excellent demonstration of the power of social networking in engaging clinicians and other scientists in a wide-ranging discussion of the merits or otherwise of journal articles in a way that traditional journal clubs simply cannot manage"*

*"There is no doubt that @twitjournalclub has demonstrated the potential to move education and learning from more traditional forums"*

*"When in real life would you get medical students and consultants discussing a paper on an even level?"*

The journal club has even been mentioned in an article published in Nature. ([Zoonotica](#), 2013)

My advice to anyone who is sceptical about Twitter, sign up and give it a go. Twitter isn't just about finding out what your favourite celebrity had for breakfast, Twitter can be a source of fantastic information and the journal club is just one use of it for medical education.

Follow us @twitjournalclub and visit the website <http://www.twitjc.com> for more information.

## References

Rivers, E., Nguyen, B., [Haystad](#), S., Ressler, J., Muzzin, A., [Knoblich](#), B., Peterson, E. & [Tomlanovich](#), M. (2001) Early Goal-Directed Therapy in the Treatment of Severe Sepsis and Septic Shock. *N Engl J Med*. 345 (19), 1368-1377.

[Silvey](#), N. & [Watkin](#), D. (2013) *Twitter Journal Club: utilising social media in evidence-based medicine*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.evidencelive.org/posters/2013/twitter-journal-club-utilising-social-media-in-evidence-based-medicine/1243958#>.

[Zoonotica](#). (2013) *Social Media for Science Outreach – A Case Study: A Twitter Journal Club*. [Online] Available from: <http://www.nature.com/spoton/2013/04/social-media-for-science-outreach-a-case-study-a-twitter-journal-club/>.