

The Winning Formula

Experiences from the Neurology and Stroke Journal Club

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Background

The Neurology and Stroke department journal club (JC) has been running for over 30 years. It has evolved significantly but has always been a cornerstone of teaching and learning within our department. Held weekly, it is chaired by a senior consultant with speakers drawn from the junior members of the department. We showcase the JC as an exemplar of learning as an MDT and we highlight key features required to maintain its success amongst new members. We conducted the first formal listening exercise to reflect on the longevity of JC and ways that it could improve, responsive to the ever-changing workforce.

We argue that the benefits of this peer-led learning are beyond merely knowledge acquisition but are important in fostering a sense of community and promoting good working relationships between different members of the team. This is particularly important with the current post-graduate workforce where, more than ever before, trainees are less-than-full-time with rotational placement and often a transient team model. We present three key learning points and our plans for the future.

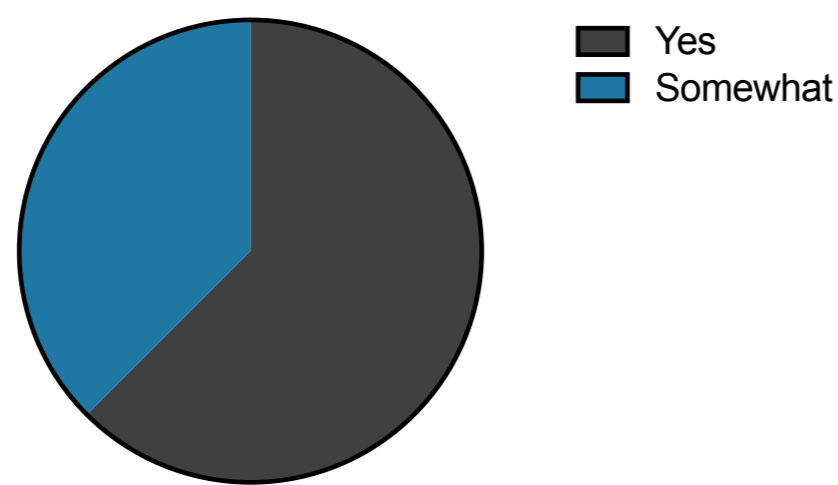
Method

An anonymous survey was conducted in May 2024, inviting all members of the Neurosciences JC to contribute and feedback. 24 responses were recorded (62% response rate).

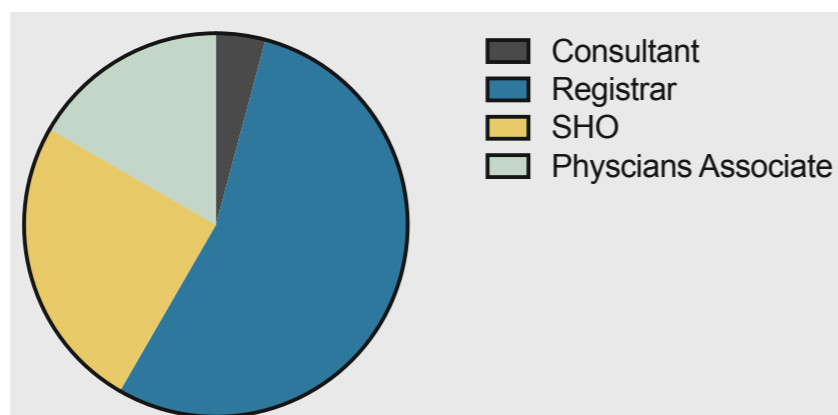
Analysis was also performed on the log of speakers from Sept 2023 to June 24.

Statistical Analysis: Comparisons between groups were made using the Chi-squared test. Qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis

What are the main findings?



Total=24

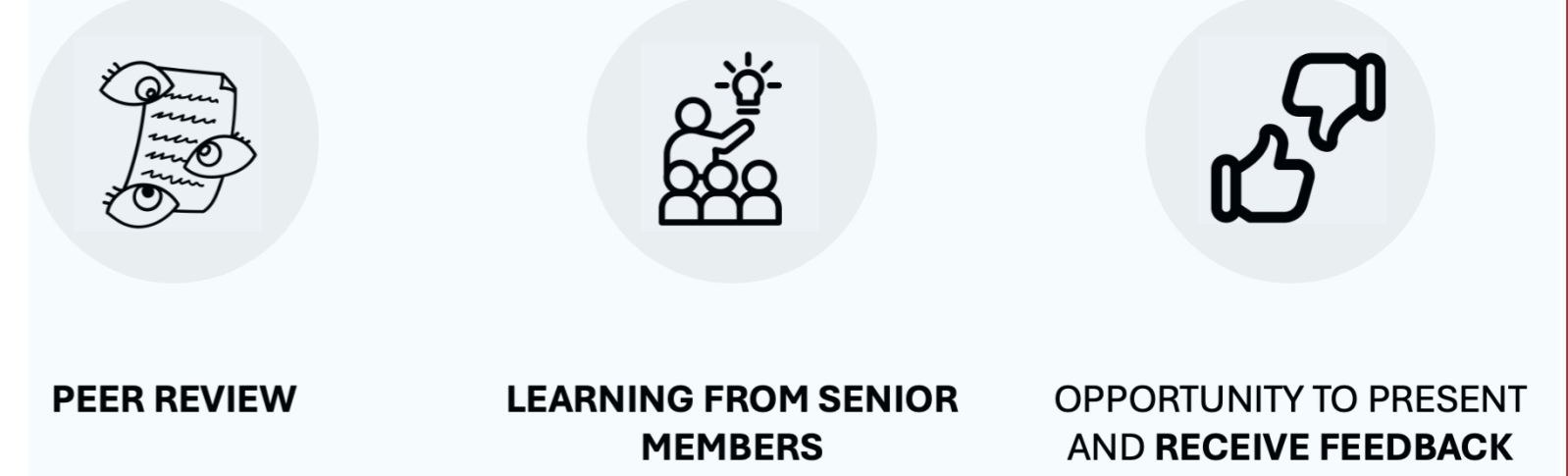
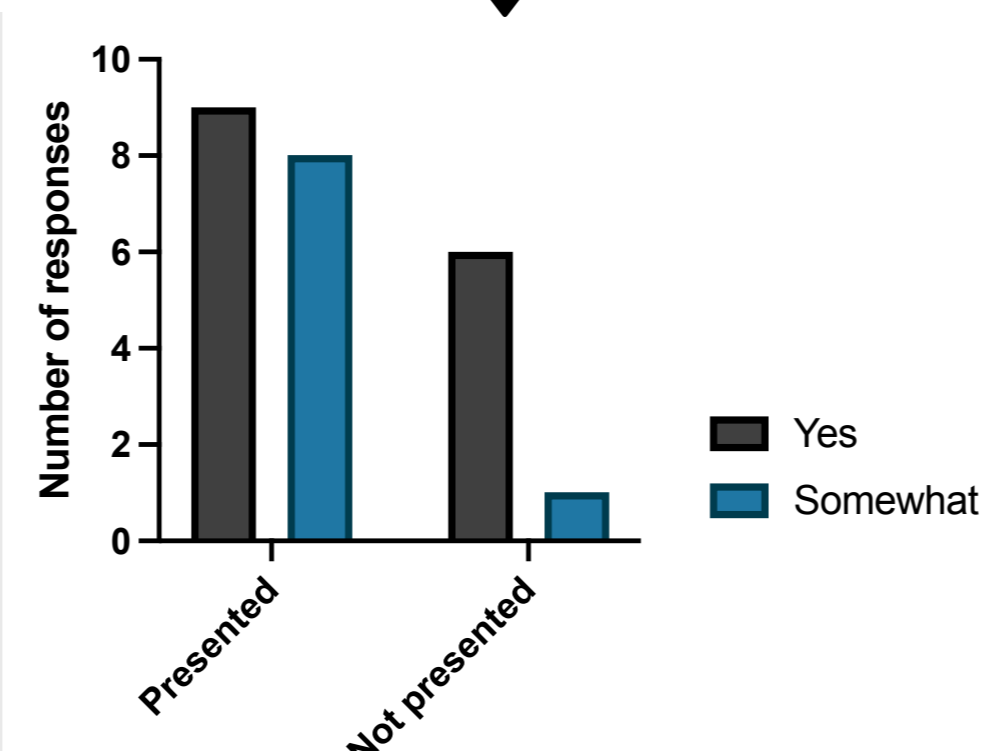


Total=24

Fig 1. Pie chart showing the proportion of respondents to the survey by job title.

Fig 2. Have the journal club discussions helped you stay up-to-date with recent developments and research in neurology and stroke?

Top: Pie chart showing those who answered 'Yes', 'Somewhat' and 'No'
Bottom: Bar chart showing % of each response separated by those who have presented a paper at JC and those who have not.



PEER REVIEW

LEARNING FROM SENIOR MEMBERS

OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT AND RECEIVE FEEDBACK



Fig 3. What aspects of the JC do you find most valuable?

Fig 4. Word Cloud showing free-text general comments.

What were the main learning points?

From Sept 2023 to June 24, only 1 (14%) Physician Associate (PA) presented at JC, compared to 16 registrars (89%) and 11 SHOs (85%). Amongst the SHO grade, 7 (64%) were rotational trainees, and 4 (34%) were junior clinical fellows.

Despite the low numbers of PA presenters, JC is valued by the PA cohort. 57% of PAs responded to the survey (comparable to other groups). Our results demonstrate that those who have not presented at JC found the discussions more helpful in keeping themselves up-to-date in Neurology and Stroke (Fig 2). This is mirrored in the comments (Fig 3 and Fig 4) where senior input and peer review in JC are top features that respondents found most valuable.

The published literature shows that junior colleagues feel safer and learn better when they feel connected to their team. Going forward, we will endeavour to promote a culture of psychological safety and inclusivity. This aligns with the Trust's values and strategic vision for the development of the workforce. Possible strategies to promote more junior member participation are below:

Speakers reminded the importance of a thorough introduction to the paper so that every member of the audience has the same starting point

Icebreakers and breakout groups

Careful speaker rota planning so new members are assigned presenter slots towards the end of their rotation

Extend the invite to JC to the full MDT inc. nurse specialists

Learning point 1: A culture of psychological safety is vital for the success of learning together as an MDT

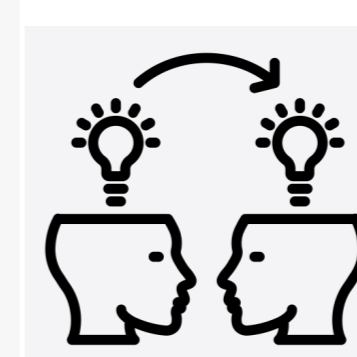
Feedback shows that an easily accessible cloud-based document outlining useful material is welcomed by new and existing members. We included:

- Format of the session
- Previously presented papers
- Suggested papers to present
- Bite-size tutorials on how to read a paper and understand stats

The SoP for Neurosciences JC: <https://tinyurl.com/ytuepx38>



This toolkit can be easily adopted by other departments. A medical student-focused Neurology journal club is in development.



All presenters are invited to contribute towards a web-based educational resource. This has shown to be a popular initiative.

<https://www.neuro-trials.org/>



Learning point 2: A bespoke toolkit is useful for new members to quickly acclimatise to journal club

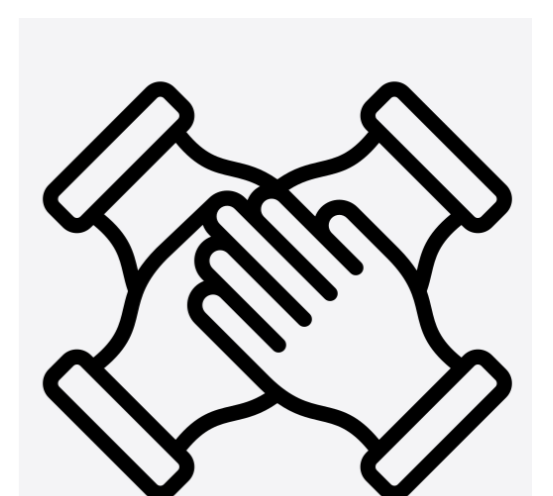
Learning point 3: Impactful outputs for all contributors

What are the limitations and plans for the future?

Ultimately, our journal club is an exemplar of learning as an MDT. It is a platform for interdisciplinary teamwork, promoting evidence-based medicine, to improve patient safety.

The learning points identified in our study and the innovative interventions discussed above are designed to allow the organic evolution and growth of the journal club.

We acknowledge that 38% of the junior doctors and Physician Associates from our department were not captured in the survey, thereby limiting the analysis and conclusions drawn. More engagement with the non-respondents is vital to understanding unforeseen barriers and promoting inclusivity and equity for the team.



References

We are grateful to all the contributors of the JC, past, and present.

References: Grote H, Schon F. Pract Neurol 2014;14:365; Schwartz, Mark D., Deborah Dowell, Jaclyn Aperi, and Adina L. Kalet. 2007. "Improving Journal Club Presentations, Or, I Can Present That Paper in under 10 Minutes." *Evidence-Based Medicine* 12 (3): 66–68.. Hartzell, Joshua D., Ganesh R. Veerappan, Keith Posley, Nathan M. Shumway, and Steven J. Durning. 2009. "Resident Run Journal Club: A Model Based on the Adult Learning Theory." *Medical Teacher* 31 (4): e156–61. Rimmer, Abi. 2023. "How Can We Make Life Better for Doctors in Postgraduate Training?" *BMJ* 382 (August): 1783. <https://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/gesh-five-year-strategy-full-document.pdf>