

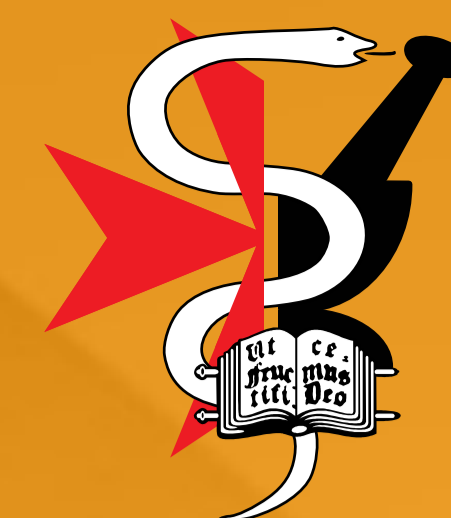
INTRODUCING JOURNAL CLUB SESSIONS FOR DOCTORATE IN PHARMACY STUDENTS

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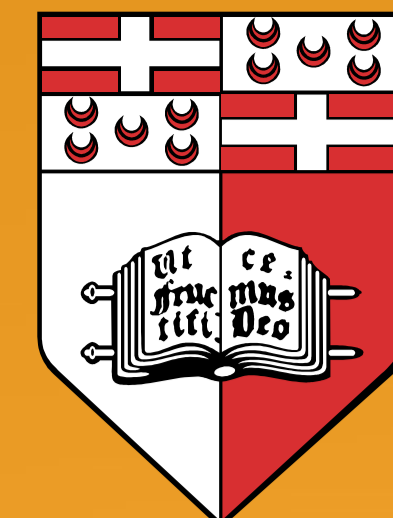
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INTRODUCTION

The Doctorate in Pharmacy programme which is offered by the University of Malta in collaboration with the College of Pharmacy of the University of Illinois at Chicago, USA is a post-graduate course leading to a level 8 degree. Within the programme, the 'Clinical Rotations' module presents two clinical practice experiences of four weeks duration. Each student is attached with a preceptor who meets the student for one hour per week. At the end of each experience, two seminars of three hours each and two journal club sessions are held. Journal clubs focus on practice-based research or translational research.

AIM

To review journal club sessions organised within the Doctorate in Pharmacy programme

METHOD

Students are sent a recent article from a peer-reviewed journal at the start of the rotation. Students are requested to read and analyse the article and fill in a 'Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP)' tool^{1,2} before attending the session, held at the end of the 4-week rotation, to help them gain a better understanding of the article content. Students are asked to find two additional articles related to the topic to stimulate further discussion.

At the start of the journal club session, preceptors organise a presentation which engages the student in the discussion and ensures they are acquiring the necessary critical appraisal skills. Preceptors grade students on an assessment sheet designed to evaluate student participation in the journal club session and on skills of critical analysis of literature.

RESULTS

- The CASP tool is composed of a series of questions which help students acquire critical appraisal skills needed to evaluate the content of the article.
- During the session, preceptors ask questions: "Is the literature review comprehensive and well-researched?" and "Would you make any amendments to the data collection method?"
- The assessment sheet used by preceptors to evaluate student participation is composed of six statements, rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from 'Poor' to 'Excellent'.
- The statements are intended to assess students' understanding of the introduction, subjects and study design, results, discussion, assessment of CASP tool and analysis of related articles.

1. Introduction	Mark Poor-Medium-Excellent 1 2 3 4 5	Comments
Background provided, Rationale for the study is important and ethical, Objectives reasonable, attainable and within the scope of the study		
2. Subjects and Study Design	Mark Poor-Medium-Excellent 1 2 3 4 5	Comments
Study design appropriate given the objectives, Method undertaken for subject sampling, Appropriateness of measures undertaken, Process standardization		

Figure 1: Excerpt from the assessment sheet preceptors use to evaluate student analysis of selected articles

DISCUSSION

Journal club sessions help students to critically assess clinically relevant data to facilitate monitoring and management of drug treatment plans in a practice scenario. Additionally, they help students in the collection, analysis and application of literature sources for the appropriate clinical management of patients.

References

¹ Guyatt GH, Sackett DL, Cook DJ. Users' Guides to the Medical Literature. II. How to Use an Article About Therapy or Prevention A. Are the results of the study valid? Evidence-Based Medicine Working Group. JAMA 1993; 270(21): 2598-2601.

² Guyatt GH, Sackett DL, Cook DJ. 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