RCPI eJournal Club Submission Criteria 2025-2026

Applicant Criteria

- The review should be solely the Trainee's own work. Reviews will be assessed for plagiarism by reviewers.
- AI technologies will not be accepted as an author of any content submitted. Screening tools may be used as part of the review process to assist with identification of content generated (in whole or in part) through AI technologies.
- Entrants may submit more than one entry at a time. Group submissions are not permitted.
- Reviews should be fully anonymised. Reviews which are not anonymised will be excluded.
- Eligible Applicants: Trainees from a training programme in the Institute of Medicine, registered on a Basic Specialist Training Programme (BST), Higher Specialist Training Programme (HST), International Residency Training Programme (IRT) or the International Clinical Fellowship Programme (ICF) with the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) at the time of abstract submission.
- Winning reviews will be considered for the Kate McGarry prize, including a medal and €1,000, which will be presented at the annual National Education Day for Doctors in Training organised by the Trainees Committee.
- To be considered for the Kate McGarry Prize you will need to be present your winning article in person at the annual National Education Day for Doctors in Training, which will take place on the 22 of May 2026.

Journal selection criteria:

- The chosen article for journal club should be relevant to General Internal Medicine, targeted at the Basic Specialist Training stage, and not overly subspecialised.
- The paper reviewed must have been published within one year of competition's commencement e.g. for the 2025/26 competition, the article must be published after the 1 January 2024.
- Your review of the selected journal article should conform to the guidelines below.

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Marking Scheme

The paper is marked out of 100 marks. A breakdown is outlined below. Marks are awarded specifically for the candidate's interpretation/critical appraisal of the chosen journal article.

The review should not exceed 500 words in length. 10% of the awarded marks are deducted for submissions over the word limit by >10%.

1. **Provide a clear description of the study design (Max 10 marks).**
   - Identify the research question
   - Describe the study design (The PICO format is advised)
     - Population studied
     - Intervention performed
     - Comparator used
     - Outcomes measured
   - Present the results of the study concisely
   - Note the authors' conclusions from the results

2. **Appraise the study's validity (Max 30 marks)**
   - Critically appraise the study's design & methodology:
     - Study design: RCT vs. observational study vs. systematic review
     - Methodology:
       - Population:
         - Were participants representative of the intended population?
         - Was the sample size adequate?
         - Were the intervention and comparator groups similar?
       - Identify areas of potential bias present in study design and how were they addressed/accounted for in the study design?
       - Confounders and Adjustments:
         - Were confounding factors identified and adjusted for?
     - Intervention and comparator
       - Was the intervention clearly defined?
       - Was the comparator appropriate?
     - Analysis of outcomes:
       - Were both primary and secondary outcomes clearly stated, clinically relevant and meaningful? Were the outcomes objective/subjective?
       - Were outcomes measured using validated tools?

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3. **Assess the reliability of the study 's results (Max 30 marks)**

- Data presentation
    - Are confidence intervals, p-values, effect sizes clearly reported?
    - Is the data presented transparently? Are limitations presented transparently?
- Statistical analysis
    - Were the statistical tests used appropriate?
    - Was Intention to treat analysis used?
    - Was missing data handled discussed and accounted for?
        - Were participants lost to follow-up/ excluded populations discussed?
        - Was there different drop-out rates between the control and intervention groups that could affect the results?
- Clinical significance
    - Is the effect size meaningful for clinical practice? Is the study adequately powered?
- Note significant Strengths and limitations of the paper
    - Identify areas of bias in the results of the study and remark on how they affect the study's reliability.
    - Consider the funding of the paper as a potential source of bias.

4. **Discuss the relevance of the paper to clinical practice (Max 30 marks)**

- Applicability to practice
    - Is the study generalisable to local practice?
        - Consider the potential influence of study population on outcomes
        - How might it be relevant to other areas of medicine?
    - How does it apply to an Irish healthcare context?
        - Is the intervention feasible in an Irish healthcare setting? Are additional resources needed to introduce this intervention (time, finances, and skills available)?
        - Has this paper has personally influenced the entrant in terms of the day-to-day practice and experiences?
        - Should this paper inform the decision-making process for your patients?
- Comparison to other literature/ current guidelines.

Additional recommended resources to aid candidates with critical appraisal of their selected journal article:

- CASP Checklists: https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/
- CEBM Critical appraisal tools: https://www.cebm.ox.ac.uk/resources/ebm-tools/critical-appraisal-tools

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