



Critically Appraising Articles



Critical appraisal is the process of evaluating research and examining its strengths and weaknesses. Journal clubs provide a structured opportunity for participants to critically appraise research articles, thus providing practitioners the ability to utilize clinical decision-making to determine the appropriateness of the integration of evidence into practice.

Starting the Critical Appraisal Process

- Identify the article type (i.e., systematic review, quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods).
- Access the appropriate critical appraisal worksheet.
 - [AOTA Critically Appraised Paper Guidelines](#)
 - [University of Oxford/Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine Worksheets](#)
- Familiarize yourself with reporting guidelines for different types of research study designs. These guidelines are meant to improve transparency when reporting research and can be used to identify elements that should be considered when critiquing an article of a specific design. The [Equator Network](#) website provides access to such guidelines.
- Examine the study's validity.
 - Review the introduction and methods sections. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - What is the study design?
 - What are its strengths and limitations?
 - Were the study parameters well-defined?
 - Was data collected in the same way for all participants?
 - Were appropriate measures used?
 - Were appropriate time points of data collection used?
 - Review the results or findings section. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - How do the results address the primary research question?
 - For quantitative studies, are the findings statistically or clinically significant?
 - For qualitative studies, are the findings credible and confirmable?
 - Review the article's discussion and conclusion sections. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Can the results be generalized to other clients, populations, and/or settings?
 - Is there an aspect of my current practice that I could consider changing or maintaining in light of these results?

- Is it feasible for me to implement the proposed intervention or measurement in my setting?

If you are interested in hosting a journal club for NOTA, please submit a Short Course Presenter Application (located under the Continuing Ed heading on NOTA's website).

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2021). *Critically appraising articles*. <https://www.aota.org/practice/practice-essentials/evidencebased-practiceknowledge-translation/-/media/9131b21eee1e4d62a80db8f8ea01aea9.ashx>