

# Letters to the Editor [JCANPA@UMANITOBA.CA](mailto:JCANPA@UMANITOBA.CA)

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**Dear Editor:**

We are writing to share our positive experience in the recent development of the Edmonton Physician Assistant (PA) Journal Club (JC). The JC launched on 11 January 2018 in a small restaurant in St. Albert, Alberta. Immediately, it integrated our community of military and civilian PAs in Northern Alberta.

Following the successful Alberta PA Demonstration Project in 2014, the number of practicing PAs in the province slowly grew. Despite this, PAs in Alberta were challenged by limited contact with each other; any struggles encountered on the job were your own to navigate. Although the annual Canadian Association of Physician Assistants conference provided some networking opportunity, Albertan PAs were not distinct from the *prairie chapter* until recently. Therefore, we identified a need to create a local organization that could unite the region's PAs to generate solutions *together*. PAs in Northern Alberta were growing as a medical profession, and so began our scholarly journey.

The primary goal of the Edmonton PA JC is to learn how to assess a peer-reviewed journal article effectively. With this, we obtained accreditation through the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Preparation for and attendance of the JC contributes to our annual continuing medical education (CME) requirements. The format involves monthly presentations, initially of one article per meeting, later expanding to two. Initial sessions were facilitated by two retired military physicians, both vocal leaders and highly dedicated to the advancement of the PA role. They were instrumental in identifying the direction of the JC, provided resources for better understanding of statistical analyzes, and recommended which study designs to evaluate. Our supporting physicians also presented on the basics of evidence-based medicine (EBM). Attendees learned the importance and strategies of implementing EBM in order to provide the best patient care. With a greater understanding of how to critically appraise scientific literature, the Edmonton PA JC generates intriguing encounters. Some highlights of the JC include a practical airway management session and a live video presentation from a PA practicing in Calgary.

Some positive consequences of the Edmonton PA JC have been the comradery built between group members. Being together inspires members to grow as medical experts and scholars, satisfying the profession's commitment to the CANMeds roles. Coming together regularly also allows members to discuss issues in the workplace and remain knowledgeable about the advancements of the profession in Alberta. The JC also summons other healthcare professions to join the organization; our community consists of civilian and military PAs and willingly invites medics, nurses, nurse practitioners and

international medical graduates. The JC demonstrates the profession's advocacy for multidisciplinary patient care.

The group's founder encourages all PAs in Canada to partake in similarly meaningful activities that promote CME and enthusiasm for EBM. The profession is seeking more ambassadors as PAs are making a noticeable impact on the Canadian healthcare system. Correspondence with the authors is welcomed so that others may learn more about the encouraging process that the Edmonton PA JC has undergone this year.

Sincerely,  
Cindy Gilmore and Natalie Dies

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