

Staying on Top of the Literature

When I was preparing for my pediatric surgery boards, I asked an emeritus professor for advice. He recommended what he had done for his boards: read every article ever published in the Journal of Pediatric Surgery. While this may have been feasible in 1979 with thirteen volumes, it was not feasible now with fifty-three. Not only have journals continued to churn out articles, they are doing it more quickly. The number of citations added to MEDLINE per year has almost tripled over the last twenty years from 322,825 in 1996 to 869,666 in 2016. Our ability to produce medical data as a community has exceeded our ability to consume it as individuals. I would like to offer you some strategies and resources to compete.

1. Primary Journal. Identify the primary journal for your specialty. Commit yourself to reviewing every issue.
 - a. Make it a habit. Try to reserve time on your outlook calendar so it does not get skipped. Do it with a peer so you can hold each other accountable. Pair it with a treat (like a molasses cookie at Tandem!).
 - b. If you like print, subscribe. If you like digital and free, consider *Browzine* (browzine.com). This is a service supported by our library that allows easy reading of most major journals on your tablet or phone. It also allows you to track individual journals and save articles.

2. Secondary Journals. There are many services that curate the literature. Here are a few.
 - a. *Read* (qxmd.com/read-by-qxmd) or *Case* (<https://www.casemedicalresearch.com>) or *Prime* (www.unboundmedicine.com/products/prime). These apps send you the most popular articles in selected specialties. I have received a weekly email from *Read* since fellowship. It often shows me interesting articles that I would not have otherwise. *Case* allows you to listen to audio transcriptions of abstracts which might be useful for your commute.
 - b. *Journal Watch* by the New England Journal of Medicine (jwatch.org). A good option for medical specialties. It reviews 250 major journals and posts updates by email. The twelve specialties are cardiology, emergency medicine, gastroenterology, general medicine, HIV/AIDS, hospital medicine, infectious diseases, neurology, oncology, pediatrics, psychiatry, and women's health.
 - c. *Patient Oriented Evidence that Matters* (essentialevidenceplus.com). This sends email alerts with updates. I have not used it but it looks promising.
 - d. *Uptodate* and *Dynamed*. Both of these review services also offer subscriptions to receive email alerts for "practice changing" updates. I have not used them either
 - e. *TDNet* (tdnetdiscover.com). This will send you the table of contents for the journals that you select. I find it clutters my inbox.

3. Deep Dive. Through *myNCBI*, it is possible to receive a regular email with all new publications from *PubMed* that match a particular search term. This can be overwhelming. It works well for very narrow topics and when you don't want to miss a thing. Consider it for your research projects. Ask library staff to help you set it up.

I am sure many of you have your own habits and suggestions. Please send them to me if you are interested at cturner1@mmc.edu. I will try to post them here as comments.

I would like to thank Dina McKelvy and the library staff for their help compiling these resources and for their frequent kind assistance.