

# A win-win proposition: help us to build better evidence-based information systems for you

As readers of *Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM)*, you may be interested in some of the developments currently underway to enhance the match between healthcare research reports and your own practice information needs. EBM uses validity and relevance checks to identify the best evidence for clinical practice from over 100 journals, but we realise that the range of topics is broader than most clinicians are interested in. Furthermore, our relevance assessments in the past have been based on the views of a combination of general practitioners, specialists and general internists, working at either the primary or referred care level. This may or may not represent your own interests well—we think we can do better, with a little help from you.

Recently, we have developed an online rating system that allows us to poll many more doctors as “Sentinel Readers” to determine the level of interest in a given article from the individual perspectives of doctors in primary care, hospital-based general internal medicine, and relevant subspecialties of internal medicine. This system is now being used to assess the practical relevance of articles that meet our criteria for scientific merit and is being employed to help select content featured in *ACP Journal Club* and *EBM* and soon to inform authors of *PIER*, the new Physicians’ Information and Education Resource of the American College of Physicians. Our primary objective is to help doctors keep up to date with information that they believe is truly relevant to the care of their own patients.

Those who participate as Sentinel Readers can specify the type and rate of articles that are sent their way, and enjoy many benefits from the process. In addition to seeing critically appraised articles “hot off the press,” readers can compare their

ratings and comments with those of other readers, both in their own discipline and others. Readers are provided with regularly updated listings of “Stellar Articles,” articles that were most highly rated in the previous week. North American readers enjoy a choice of Continuing Education credit options and credits are automatically tracked and provided annually in summary form. EBM will be a better, more relevant resource as a result, and new alerting and lookup opportunities are under development.

Currently, over 800 Sentinel Readers are enrolled worldwide in the rating system and we will continue to recruit until we reach a state in which each reader is perfectly comfortable with the rate at which articles are sent their way. At present, we estimate we will reach that state with about 1500 readers.

We would like you to join us if you have the following qualifications:

formal training fully completed in a primary care medical discipline (eg, general practice, family practice, or internal medicine), hospital- or referral-based general internal medicine, or subspecialty of internal medicine (eg, cardiology, oncology, or neurology) in at least part-time clinical practice with reliable internet access able to quickly respond to e-mail requests for rating articles (rating an article takes about 10 minutes).

Please see our advertisement in this issue for more information on this project or e-mail us at [plus@mcmaster.ca](mailto:plus@mcmaster.ca).

BRIAN HAYNES, MD, PhD

PAUL GLASZIOU, MD, PhD

Editors

## Journals reviewed for this issue\*

Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand  
Age Ageing  
Am J Cardiol  
Am J Med  
Am J Obstet Gynecol  
Am J Psychiatry  
Am J Public Health  
Am J Respir Crit Care Med  
Ann Emerg Med  
Ann Intern Med  
Ann Surg  
Arch Dis Child  
Arch Gen Psychiatry  
Arch Intern Med  
Arch Neurol

Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med  
Arch Surg  
Arthritis Rheum  
BJOG  
BMJ  
Br J Gen Pract  
Br J Psychiatry  
Br J Surg  
CMAJ  
Chest  
Circulation  
Cochrane Library  
Crit Care Med  
Diabetes Care  
Gastroenterology

Gut  
Heart  
Hypertension  
JAMA  
J Am Coll Cardiol  
J Am Coll Surg  
J Am Geriatr Soc  
J Clin Epidemiol  
J Fam Pract  
J Gen Intern Med  
J Infect Dis  
J Intern Med  
J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry  
J Pediatr

J Vasc Surg  
Lancet  
Med Care  
Med J Aust  
N Engl J Med  
Neurology  
Obstet Gynecol  
Pain  
Pediatrics  
Rheumatology  
Spine  
Stroke  
Surgery  
Thorax

\*Approximately 60 additional journals are reviewed. This list is available on request.