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.

BRIAN HAYNES, MD, PhD
PAUL GLASZIOU, MD, PhD
Editors
A win-win proposition: help us to build better evidence-based information systems for you

Brian Haynes and Paul Glasziou

*Evid Based Med* 2003 8: 102
doi: 10.1136/ebm.8.4.102

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://ebm.bmj.com/content/8/4/102

**Email alerting service**

Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

**Topic Collections**

Articles on similar topics can be found in the following collections

- *General practice / family medicine* (352)

**Notes**

To request permissions go to:
http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to:
http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to:
http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/