



EVIDENCE-BASED REVIEWS IN SURGERY:

An update

by Robin S. McLeod, MD, FACS, FRCSC

Uncertain whether nuts, corn, and popcorn consumption really are associated with an increased incidence of diverticular disease? There are a lot of ways to manage pilonidal sinus, but do medical professionals know what the evidence is to support those treatments? Should physicians prescribe steroids to patients in septic shock? What about beta-blockers in patients undergoing noncardiac surgery?

If a physician is uncertain about what to do in these situations, the American College of Surgeons invites practicing surgeons and residents to participate in the Evidence-Based Reviews in Surgery (EBRS) program. The EBRS program is an internet-based journal club designed to teach critical appraisal skills to both residents and practicing general and colorectal surgeons. EBRS consists of eight monthly packages per academic year, beginning in October and running through May of the following year. Each package includes a clinical article relevant to the practice of general surgery, plus a methodological article that can be used to assist in the evaluation of the clinical article. In addition, methodological and clinical reviews are provided by experts in the field. The selected articles cover a spectrum of important clinical and methodologic topics.

The aim of this program is for participants to evaluate the clinical article, as well as further their knowledge about the topic, and to learn critical appraisal skills that can be used to evaluate other articles in the future. It is free to all members (including residents) who are members of the ACS. You can access the EBRS program through the ACS Web site: <http://www.facs.org/education/ebrs.html>.

If you want to participate in the listserv discussions and receive continuing medical education (CME) credits, then you can register with Marg McKenzie, RN, by e-mailing her at mmckenzie@mtsinai.on.ca.

The EBRS program topics for 2009–2010 include:

- Use of the World Health Organization checklist
- Management of biliary tract disease in pregnant females
- Use of computed tomography for cervical spine clearance in trauma patients

- Association between nut, corn, and popcorn consumption and diverticular disease
- Management of pilonidal sinus
- Use of beta-blockers in the perioperative period in patients undergoing noncardiac surgery
 - Efficacy of hydrocortisone in patients in septic shock
 - Value of methicilin-resistant staphylococcus aureus screening of surgical patients

In addition, the program will include four packages on colorectal surgery topics in 2009–2010:

- Role of a defunctioning stoma following low anterior resection
- Comparison of quality of life following abdominoperineal resection and low anterior resection
 - The association of colonoscopy and death from colorectal cancer
 - Effect of the type of anastomosis on the risk of recurrence following ileocolic resection for Crohn's disease

The EBRS program will resume in October of 2009, and the schedule for the upcoming year is posted on the EBRS Web site. The following list outlines benefits of the EBRS program. These benefits may be unfamiliar to some surgeons and residents, but the College believes they add true value to the EBRS program:

- We have two listserv discussion groups: one for general surgery topics and one for colorectal surgery topics. All members are invited to participate in both discussion groups.
 - At the end of the listserv discussion, members can complete five multiple-choice questions pertaining to the methodological and clinical articles and reviews. Upon completion of the questions, the user will receive feedback from the pertinent sections of the articles or reviews that support the correct answer.
 - Our clinical and methodological reviews are completed by national and international experts. Each article features a clinical review written by an American and a Canadian expert—so two different perspectives on the issue are often obtained.
 - We have an “Archives” section that is indexed by clinical and methodological topic. We now have almost 100 packages that have been reviewed over the past 10 years and can be used as a resource by members interested in a particular topic.

- Members can also access online some of the most widely read journals, including the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the *Annals of Surgery*, *Diseases of the Colon and Rectum*, and *Surgery*, and use them for their own reading. A member may simply go to the EBRs Web site and look for “Journals.”

- We have added a section called “Evidence-Based Medicine” to the program, which includes a glossary of terms and links to other Web sites that may be of value to members.

- All of the EBRs reviews are published and up to date, and almost 50 articles have appeared in the *Canadian Journal of Surgery*, *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*, and *Diseases of the Colon and Rectum*; a new link is available with access to all of the review articles.

- All general surgery and colorectal surgery programs should have received a schedule of the topics for 2009–2010 by this time, and the complete packages will be sent in early September.

- For individuals planning to attend the ACS Clinical Congress in Chicago this year, the College invites practicing surgeons and residents to attend the EBRs symposium entitled What Is the Evidence for Antibiotic Prophylaxis in Mesh Inguinal Hernia Repair: Let’s Do Journal Club, October 12, 4:15–5:45 pm. We will have touch pads at the symposium and audience participation will be encouraged.

EBRS is a program of both the American College of Surgeons and the Canadian Association of General Surgeons and is endorsed by the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons and the Canadian Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons. EBRs continues to be funded by Ethicon and Ethicon Endo-Surgery Canada, and Ethicon Inc. and Ethicon Endo-Surgery Inc. in the U.S., and we are grateful for their ongoing support, which enables EBRs to be provided, without charge, to members of the ACS.

The members of the steering committees include: Nancy Baxter, University of Toronto; Carl Brown, University of British Columbia; Karen Brasel, Medical College of Wisconsin; Prosanto Chaudhury, McGill University; Suzanne Cutler, Cedars Sinai Los Angeles; Bill Fitzgerald,

St. Anthony; Harry Henteleff, Dalhousie University; Andy Kirkpatrick, University of Calgary; Steve Latosinsky, University of Western Ontario; Tony MacLean, University of Calgary; Tara Mastracci, Cleveland Clinic; Arden Morris, University of Michigan; Leigh Neumayer, University of Utah; and Larissa Temple, Memorial Sloan Kettering, NY. We welcome a new representative of the Canadian Association of General Surgeons Resident group, Luc Dubois, and a new general surgery program director, Celia Divino, from Mount Sinai, NY. Our administrative coordinator is Ms. McKenzie.

If you have any comments or wish to be part of the listserv discussion and receive Maintenance of Certification credits for completion of the monthly packages, you can register by contacting Ms. McKenzie at mmckenzie@mtsinai.on.ca. 

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