Being a heart failure nurse is a unique experience. Heart failure nurses have a specific set of skills related to the disease they help manage, as well as exceptional communication skills. It is important to foster this uniqueness. One way this can be done is through a journal club. The general purpose of a journal club is to facilitate the review of a specific research study and to discuss implications of the study for clinical practice. There are many advantages to being involved in a journal club, more importantly, a heart failure journal club. A journal club can keep you up to date on new knowledge, promote awareness of current research findings, help you to become familiar with the best current clinical research, and encourage research utilization.

Forming a heart failure journal club in your area can be easy and rewarding. First you must identify heart failure nurses in your community/state. Visiting the members’ area of www.aahfn.org will help you decide how many potential journal club attendees are in your area. You can contact the AAHFN national office to get a list of email addresses for a specific group of members. After you have established who you want to include in the journal club, you must find a relevant, recent journal article with discussion points and distribute it to the members. Some groups provide journal club discussion questions at the end of the article. Next, you must find a convenient location and time to meet. The location could be at your clinic, in the hospital, or a local restaurant. It may be advantageous to solicit the help of a pharmaceutical or device representative who is willing to provide a facilitator for the discussion and/or dinner! The heart failure journal club could meet monthly or quarterly, depending on what the group wants to do. It is also important to designate someone to facilitate the meeting at the beginning so the discussion stays on track and remains an educational experience. It is important to gather feedback periodically and make recommended changes to improve this experience for all members. You will want to promote the journal club regularly to keep attendance high. The value of a journal club is that it can promote better understanding of the research which translates to better practices at the bedside or in the clinic. This translates in to better care of our heart failure patients.