How to critique a journal article

A critique of an article can be described as “a careful, complete examination of a study to judge its strengths, weaknesses, logical links, meaning and significance” and this must be completed for every article you read before you decide how useful it is to your practice. [http://www.nursingplanet.com/Nursing_Research/critiquing_nursing_research.html](http://www.nursingplanet.com/Nursing_Research/critiquing_nursing_research.html)

Critiquing an article is at first not an easy process and so below are a few tips to assist you.

1. Read through the article once.
2. Read the questions below.
3. Then read the article once more with the questions in mind.
4. Answer the questions either by just thinking them through or by making notes in a notebook or on the article itself.

Questions to consider...

**Introduction**
- Did the title of the article interest you and give you an immediate idea of what the research is about?
- Who are the authors of the article/conductors of the research and in which journal is the article published?
- Does the introduction of the article, clearly describe what problem is that they were addressing in the research?
- Does the introduction clearly describe the purpose of the research?
- Is the research likely to have an impact on our nursing practice?

**Literature Review**
- Is the literature review current (in the last 5 – 10 years)
- Is the literature review relevant to the research that has been conducted?

**Research Question**
- What is the research question/hypothesis?

**Research Methods**
- Is the research quantitative/qualitative?
- What is the research method? Do you think it is appropriate/the best way?
- What was the method of sampling participants?
- Was the sample big enough?
- Could there be any bias in the sample? If yes, why?
- How was the data collected? Where any tools used? Were they reliable and accurate?
- Did they need/get ethics approval to conduct the study?

**Results and findings**
- How was the data analysed?
- What were the findings of the research?
- Where the results displayed in a clear and understandable way?
- Did the authors discuss the results in relation to the original problem identified?
- What were the main strengths of the study?
- What do you link were the limitations of the study and were they identified by the authors?

**Reflection**
- Could the study be replicated?
- Does the study, or could you, make any suggestions as to how this research could be taken further?
- How can you relate this research and its findings to your nursing practice and patient care?
- Consider one thing you have learnt from reading this article.

Written by the Child Nurse Practice Development Initiative, 2011. [www.childnursepracticedevelopment.org.za](http://www.childnursepracticedevelopment.org.za)