Caveats in the interpretation of the surgical literature

Ulrich Gueller

The ability to appraise research literature critically is an invaluable tool in the era of evidence-based medicine. The objective of this educational article is to highlight certain caveats that are important to those who seek to interpret the surgical literature. These caveats are illustrated with intuitive examples drawn from the field of surgery. It is hoped that the article will help surgeons to recognize the common pitfalls encountered when interpreting scientific reports. This is important if research findings are to be transferred appropriately into the realm of clinical practice.