

Writing Clinical Case Reports for Publication: URM Scholarship Series

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Sessions objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss the importance of publishing case reports
2. Select a case to submit for publication
3. Write a clinical case report
4. Submit a clinical case report for publication

Tell us about yourself: What is your academic role?

- ▶ Medical student
- ▶ Medical resident
- ▶ Assistant professor
- ▶ Associate professor
- ▶ Professor
- ▶ Community physician

Why is important to publish case reports?

- ▶ Improved CV for Residency/Fellowship or academic physician application
- ▶ Completion of residency/fellowship
- ▶ Promotion as an academic physician
- ▶ Reputation in professional community
- ▶ Improvement of medical education

Most importantly:

For improvement in patient care!!!

Let us know how familiar you are with the topic.

Have you ever written a case report?

- ▶ I have published a case report
- ▶ I have submitted a case report, but it was not accepted
- ▶ I have written a case report
- ▶ I have collaborated on a case report writing project

How to get started?

- ▶ Get familiar with the writing process/outline before you write a case
- ▶ Any time you encounter a case that puzzled you/your team...think about reporting the case
- ▶ Find a more experienced mentor/collaborator willing to co-author the case report.
 - ▶ Make sure he/she agrees with your expectations, deadline, etc...
 - ▶ If your mentor/collaborator says ‘it is not worth it’, ask why? Do not give up without an objective reason
- ▶ Set your deadline and make it happen!

How to select a case to report?

A case that you want to share with others!!

- ▶ New / rare / unusual condition
- ▶ Rare /unusual presentation of a common disease
- ▶ A condition that needs to have increased awareness
- ▶ Novel therapeutic regimen
- ▶ A more cost-effective diagnosis / management
- ▶ Rare or unusual complication of diagnosis / treatment
- ▶ A challenging diagnosis

Before you start writing

- ▶ Obtain patient consent and IRB approval
- ▶ Use primary literature to find out what else has been reported about this condition/treatment
 - Pubmed
 - Cochrane reviews
- ▶ Define your outline
 - What is the sequence of events?
 - What are the main take home messages and teaching points?

Patient consent for publishing the case

- ▶ Some journals have their own form
- ▶ Some hospitals have their own form and approval process
- ▶ some hospitals and journals accept a generic form

Example of a generic form for medical photographs-----→

Informed Consent for Medical Photographs

Patient name: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Check here if minor or unable to provide consent

I consent for medical photographs to be made of me. I understand that the information may be used for medical teaching or for publication in medical journals or textbooks. I understand that the images may be seen by members of the general public, in addition to physicians, physicians in training, scientists and medical researchers that use these publications for their professional education. Although these photographs will be used without identifying information (such as my name, date of birth), I understand that it is possible that someone may recognize me.

By consenting to these medical photographs I understand that I will not receive payment from any party.

Refusal to consent to these photographs will in no way affect the medical care I will receive.

By signing this form below I confirm that this consent form has been explained to me in terms which I understand.

Patient signature

Witness signature

If I have any questions or wish to withdraw my consent in the future I may contact:

Adapted from American College of Medical Genetics statement , 2000

Have you ever submitted an IRB protocol?

- ▶ Yes
- ▶ No

Obtaining an IRB approval

At many universities, SINGLE case report that does NOT contain patient identifiers and meets the following criteria is non-human research. However, use the below items to contact your IRB for approval

- My study report contains information from only 1 (one) patient
- My study report does NOT contain patient's name or initials
- My study report does NOT contain patient's date of birth
- My study report does NOT contain patient's home address
- My study report does NOT contain patient's email address
- My study report does NOT contain patient's driver license number, passport number or national identification number
- My study report does NOT contain patient's birthplace
- My study report does NOT contain patient's telephone number
- My study report does not contain hospital ID number or other ID numbers
- All the non-essential details of the case presented in the manuscript were omitted
- If I used patient pictures or imagistic studies in the manuscript, than I am attaching written permission from patient
- The information presented in the manuscript is part of the routine medical care

How to write a case report?

-usual components-

TITLE

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

CASE PRESENTATION

DISCUSSION

CONCLUSIONS

REFERENCES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Case presentation

- ▶ Describe the events in chronological order using past tense
- ▶ For ROS, include only the pertinent negatives
- ▶ Use as much objective data as possible
 - ▶ lab results
 - ▶ de-identified pictures of imagistic studies/pathology reports, etc...
 - ▶ vitals
- ▶ Avoid abbreviations

Identifiable information to be removed from a case report

1. Names
2. All geographic subdivisions smaller than a State
3. All elements of dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death, encounter dates, surgery date, and all ages over 89
4. Telephone numbers, Fax numbers, Electronic mail (e-mail) addresses, Social Security numbers
5. Medical record numbers, Health plan beneficiary numbers, Account Numbers
6. Certificate/license numbers, Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers
7. Device identifiers and serial numbers, Web Universal Resource Locators (URL's)
8. Internet Protocol (IP) address numbers
9. Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints
10. Full face photographic images and any comparable images
11. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code that may identify an individual

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/coveredentities/De-identification/guidance.html>

Discussion

- ▶ Focus on why your case is important and significant and different
- ▶ Compare and contrast other similar cases from the literature using articles focused to your clinical question

This is not a comprehensive literature review!

Introduction

This is to orient the reader and provide a brief background on the matter

- ▶ What is known?
- ▶ What is unknown?
- ▶ Why this case is reported?
 - Teaching points?
 - Rarity?
 - Impact?

Conclusions

- ▶ Take home messages
- ▶ Teaching points
- ▶ Impact on the field
- ▶ Suggested directions for the future

References

- ▶ Use primary literature only
- ▶ Use most recent publications
- ▶ Usually 5-10 original articles

Abstract

- ▶ A concise summary of your case

Title

- ▶ Disease name, population, why is this important....

Which parts of writing the case report seem to be more difficult for you?

- ▶ Abstract
- ▶ Intro
- ▶ Methods
- ▶ Results
- ▶ Discussion
- ▶ Conclusion

FAQ:

Presentation and submission guidelines

- ▶ First submit to a conference of your choice where you are more likely to benefit from the educational sessions and the networking
- ▶ Then submit to the journal of your choice (preferred pub-med indexed and with highest impact factor)
- ▶ If it does not get accepted, do not give up and move down the line to the next journal/conference on the list **FAST**

Answers to frequently asked questions

- ▶ After a case report is published in a journal, you cannot submit it to a conference (they have the copyright)...
- ▶ Only submit to one publication at the time
- ▶ If you get back suggested edits from the editor
 - ▶ complete them in a timely manner (no more than 1 week)
 - ▶ be respectful and agreeable and address all the concerns individually
 - ▶ ask your mentor to review it and then send it back
- ▶ Remember that with time, your references will not be up to date, therefore be efficient and re-submit fast

Links to already published case reports

- ▶ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=jama+case+report>
- ▶ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=nejm+case+report>
- ▶ <http://www.jmedicalcasereports.com/>
- ▶ <http://www.cureus.com/search?group=articles&q=case+report&utf8=%E2%9C%93>
- ▶ <http://casereports.bmj.com/>

Acknowledgements

Moore K. - A Medical Writing Curriculum for Internal Medicine Residents: Using Adult Learning Theory to Teach Formal Medical Writing and Publication of Case Reports. MedEdPORTAL Publications; 2015.

Useful resources

- ▶ Am J Health-Syst Pharm—Vol 63 Oct 1, 2006 How to write a patient case report 1. HENRY COHEN (<http://www.ajhp.org/content/63/19/1888.full.pdf+html>)
- ▶ Gagnier JJ et al - The CARE guidelines: consensus-based clinical case report guideline development. J Clin Epidemiology. 2014 Jan;67(1):46-51. doi: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2013.08.003.
- ▶ J Med Libr Assoc. Apr;104(2):DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3163/1536-5050.104.2.010>

Practice makes
it perfect!!!

We are planning a hands-on case report-writing workshop with STFM experts (60 min) to apply these skills on **Wednesday March 3, 2021 at 7 PM EST**. We will work with you to advance your draft of clinical case presentation toward publication.

This is a very small group of 10 participants on a first come first served. So please sign up early!!!