



How to write a case study/Report

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1

What is a case report?



- A case report describes and discusses a clinical event .
- It is not designed to prove causation or provide information for generalisation .
- They are shorter than other articles.

2

Who does them?

- Nurses
- GPs
- Dentists
- Radiographers
- Osteopaths
- Chiropractors
- Homeopaths
- **Herbalists**

3

Constraints and Guidelines

- Finding time
- Working alone
- Lack of experience
- Lack of information
- Lack of confidence



- This presentation aims to help you overcome these to enable you to routinely collect data and write well structured reports

4

What you need to invest in the process

- Some preliminary work to understand what to document
- Clearly defined aim
- Rigorous methods to measure response
- Some time
- willingness to critically review practice
- An acceptance of medical expectations of reporting

5

Why do one?

- Increases your engagement with patient
- Increases your engagement with your community of practitioners by sharing experiences
- Enables you to clearly communicate to other healthcare practitioners what you do
- To provide insights that can improve patient care
- It is a way to get your name in print and stands out on your curriculum vitae
- Potential to influence research/government/policy priorities

6

What are they good for?

They may:

- illuminate clinical practice by describing personal experiences of one practitioner
- describe novel results or practises
- be used to suggest new hypotheses
- be used to report events that have been reported previously but are rare to reassess frequency
- Report serious events like adverse effects
- Provide material to promote your practice of herbal medicine

7

What to do it on?

- Anything linked to your clinical practice: an event, an observation, a course of treatment, a herb or combination of herbs, a condition, an unusual positive or negative patient response.



8

Where are they done?

- At your own Clinic/consultation room, work station or library



9

When do one?

- Anytime, with any patient especially when a patients presentation grabs your attention or clinical event surprises you
- Sometimes it is not obvious that the case is unique enough to warrant reporting – ask colleagues
- Do a literature search on a medical database such as PubMed, Ovid, or Medline to check if there have been any similar cases

10

How to do one?

- Routinely record data thoroughly
- Use numbers, categories, forms, illustrations, photographs
- You may want to liaise with others involved in the patients care and gather medical notes including results of tests and investigations
- Use outcome measures designed by yourself or standard globally accepted tools

11

Patient consent/ Ethical considerations

- You must gain consent from the patient if you wish to include pictures or clinical details from which they may be identified. You may anonymise patient details.
- Editorial Boards will want to avoid any breaching of medical confidentiality.
- During the consent process you explain why you wish to share their case with others, the risks and benefits of doing so and answer any questions they may have.

12

A Plan for a structured report

- Title
- Author(s), addresses and any affiliation
- abstract
- Introduction
- Case report
- Literature search
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Acknowledgements
- References
- Tables/illustrations/photographs/figures

13

Title



- Searchable
- It is important that the title includes the words 'case report'.
- Author(s), addresses and any affiliation

14

Abstract and key words



- **Keywords** : *like 'Case report, author guidelines, herbal medicine.'*
- Brief description of case, summary of previous literature, and what it contributes to field – emphasise the learning points.
- The abstract is read by people deciding whether to read your full case report so keep it concise (no more than 150 words) and snappy.

15

Introduction

- Covers purpose of Report.
- Provide some context that can be developed in the discussion section.
- Why did you think this case was worth writing up?
- Why do you think it would be of interest?
- Is there a clear message emerging?

16

Case report

- Description of the case:
- Description of patient
- Presentation and history of presenting condition
- Physical examination
- Any investigations
- Diagnosis
- Treatment
- Outcome, and its evolution over time especially final resolution
- *Avoid unnecessary detail*

17

Literature search

- A computerised search of PubMed should be performed, and should be repeated using all the terms that could be used to describe the event. In addition, the writer should hand search past herbal literature
- Record search terms and databases used.
- What were the findings in previous reports -draw out similarities and differences.
- (see reference section for resources on how to do a literature search)



18

Discussion

- This may include the relevant literature, any hypothesis, comments on the diagnostic process/course of illness, and the outcomes
- Show how your case differs from the norm, what lessons can be learned or why the event had an impact on you.
- Show how it is contributing to the understanding of the health issue or herbal treatment. Compare your new case with prior knowledge.
- Don't provide biomedical explanations for response to treatment without supporting references.
- Avoid credulous statements. Try citing previous clinical observations and give the references.

19

Summary/conclusion

- Say what was learned
- Avoid drawing a 'conclusion' that there is a link between the treatment and the effect in a single case: it could be just a coincidence.
- Include an assessment of how far it can be regarded as reliable – document variables
- Remember it is a short account of a particular event - an anecdote.
- Such real life medical evidence is valuable – it could, for example, be an the first indication of a real biological effect.

20

Rule of C checklist on completion of Report

by Richard A Rison

- Is it **C**lear, **C**oncise, and **C**oherent?
- Does it **C**onvey your message?
- Have you used **C**ases Database to look for any previously similar reported cases, and included them, if appropriate, in your references?
- Have you **C**onferred with your **C**olleagues on the **C**ontent?
- Will it **C**ause the reader to be **C**urious?
- Did you obtain **C**onsent?
- Does it **C**ontain all of the necessary information?
- Does it **C**omply with prospective publisher guidelines?
- Do you think that it may need **C**opyediting (proof reading)?
- Do your **C**o-authors **C**oncur with the **C**ompleted paper?

25

Rule of C page 2

- Have you **C**onveyed **C**uriosity for your **C**ase report within your **C**over letter to the editorial team? Remember: your **C**over letter is the sales pitch to the editorial team! Make it **C**ount!
- Can you **C**ut anything unnecessary out?
- Are your findings likely to be a **C**oincidence or by **C**hance alone? If so, then mention this in the **C**onclusion section.
- Is the writing style **C**onsistent? Many times I find co-authored manuscripts have different writing styles within the same paper depending on who wrote what section. There should be a **C**entral, **C**orresponding author who is in **C**harge and oversees all of this.

26

Rule of C page 3

- Is the **C**ase report written in a **C**hronological fashion with respect to the patient's history and **C**hain of events?
- Is there anything that can be **C**ut out and have it still **C**ontain the **C**ompulsory information?
- Is it **C**oncise?
- Have you used within the manuscript **C**opyrighted information from another source? If so, do you need and/or have permission for use?
- After **C**ompletion, wait a **C**ouple of days before final submission to **C**lear your mind and read the manuscript again to **C**atch any mistakes that you may have made while you were **C**aught up in the **C**ompletion of it.

27

Rule of C page 4

- Are the references **C**ontemporary?
- Can it be **C**omprehended by the average ("**C**") reader? Remember, open access sites are freely available to anyone with an Internet **C**onnection and **C**omputer.
- **C**ast as wide a net as possible and **C**apture your **C**olleagues' and other readers' **C**uriosity.
- **And first and foremost as a Clinician: was the Care of your patient Competent and Compassionate? (that is, are there any ethical concerns that may preclude peer review and publication?).**

28

Journals that publish case reports

- *BMJ Case Reports* (www.casereports.bmj.com),
- *Cases Journal* (www.casesjournal.com)
- *Journal of Medical Case Reports* (www.jmedicalcasereports.com)
- *Journal of Dermatological Case Reports* (www.jdcr.eu)
- BioMedCentral Infectious Diseases 2015
- European Journal of Integrative Medicine
- And NIMH's **Journal of Herbal Medicine**

29

Who might be interested in your case study

- Patients
- Herbalists
- Your professional body
- Other healthcare professions
- Healthcare funders/ insurers/ policy makers
- Scientists/ academics
- Educationalists
- Public/ media

30

Sir William Osler 1849-1919

Canadian born physician, a founding professor of John Hopkins Hospital

“Observe, record, tabulate, communicate. Use your five senses. Learn to see, learn to hear, learn to feel, learn to smell, and know that by practice alone you can become expert.”

31

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32

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33

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<http://aim.bmj.com/content/22/2/83>
- McCarthy LH, Reilly KE. **How to write a case report.** *Fam Med* 2000;32(3):190-5.
- <https://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/the-role-of-anecdotes-in-science-based-medicine/>
- **Principles and Practice of Phytotherapy, Modern Herbal Medicine, 2:** By Kerry Bone, Simon Mills

34

Open access resources

- Writing case reports guide by Rison, Journal of Medical Case Reports 2013, 7:239
<http://www.jmedicalcasereports.com/content/7/1/239>
- Anwar R, Kabir H, Botchu R, Khan SA, Gogi N. How to write a case report. *student BMJ* 2004;12:45-88.
http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/728271_4
- The CARE guidelines provide a framework and tools that supports the publication of case reports and the reporting of patient encounters. <http://www.care-statement.org/index.html>

35

Open access resources 2

- chiropractor guide to writing case study article.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2597880/>
- how to write case report Royal College Physicians
http://www.bsaci.org/professionals/RCPHow_to_write_a_clinical_case_report.pdf
- how to write report for publication
<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Medical-Case-Study-Report>
- http://casereports.bmj.com/site/about/How_to_complete_full_cases_template.pdf
- Tips for writing a case report by the novice author
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jmrs.18/pdf>

36

Open access resources 3

- John Hopkins list of case studies
- <http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/gec/studies/>
- http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/library/guidance/lit_search/
Literature searching resource website London school of hygiene and tropical medicine. The 6 steps to an effective literature search provide you with a systematic plan for literature searching, whether you are conducting a quick background search or a systematic review.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiQJXTD0VI> **how to write a literature review** aimed at graduate students USA western library 5 minute video

37

Open access resources 4

- https://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/725778?generatepdf=true JHM author information pack aimed primarily at research papers rather than case reports.
- <https://www.elsevier.com/about/company-information/policies/patient-consent> Patient consent information
- <http://citationstyles.org/> Reference management software site.
- To install the reference style for Journal Herbal Medicine access:
<http://open.mendeley.com/use-citation-style/journal-of-herbal-medicine>

38