

## Short Communication

### Ten Tips on How to Write and Publish a Case Report

Farooq Azam Rathore,<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Tawab Khalil,<sup>2</sup> Fareeha Farooq<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Armed Forces Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine (AFIRM), Rawalpindi; <sup>3</sup>Department of Biochemistry, Islamic International Medical College, Riphah University, Rawalpindi

#### Abstract

Case report is a form of medical writing that describes an unusual presentation of common diseases, a rare disease / phenomenon, or a novel treatment of disease in a scientific manner. Case report is often seen as an easy and quick form of medical writing. However, it can be daunting at times, if the writer does not know where to begin and how to write different sections of a case report. We share ten easy and practical tips that can help novice and expert medical writer alike, to draft a 'publication' worthy case report in the minimum amount of time. These tips will help the writer to avoid common mistakes associated with case reports.

**Corresponding Author** | Dr. Muhammad Tawab Khalil, Armed Forces Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine (AFIRM), Rawalpindi;  
**Email:** tawabkhalil2013@gmail.com

**Keywords** | Medical writing; case study; case series;; CARE guidelines

#### Introduction

A case report is a detailed account of a patient's unique clinical presentation, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care.<sup>1</sup> It is a valuable tool for sharing information about unusual or complex medical cases with other healthcare professionals.<sup>1</sup> The history of case reports can be traced back to Hippocrates and their importance cannot be denied in description of scientific information regarding disease which can be missed in the clinical trials.<sup>1</sup> Writing a case report for a medical journal can be a challenging task, but by following a few key guidelines, you can produce a well-written and informative report that will be of interest to your colleagues and journal editors for a possible publication.

Determine the purpose of the case report: Is the case report intended to describe a rare or unusual condition, or to highlight a new treatment approach? Having a clear

purpose will help guide the content and structure of the report.

Choose an interesting and relevant case: To be considered for publication in a medical journal, a case report should be both interesting and relevant to the journal's readership. Choose a case that presents a unique diagnostic or treatment challenge, or that illustrates an unusual presentation of a common disease.

Obtain informed consent: Before you begin writing your case report, it is important to obtain informed consent from the patient or the patient's legal guardian. This ensures that the patient is aware of how their personal information will be used and gives them the opportunity to opt out of the publication process. For an informed consent patient must be competent and should not be coerced.<sup>2</sup>

Gather all relevant information: This includes the patient's detailed medical history, physical examination findings, diagnostic tests and results, treatment plan and any follow-up visits. It is important to



#### Production and Hosting by KEMU

<https://doi.org/10.21649/akemu.v23i4.5256>  
 2079-7192/© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Annals of KEMU on behalf of King Edward Medical University Lahore, Pakistan.

This is an open access article under the CC BY4.0 license  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

be thorough and accurate in documenting the patient's care. This information should follow a logical manner.

Determine the structure of the case report: Most case reports follow a standard structure, including an abstract, introduction, case presentation, discussion, and conclusion. Be sure to follow these guidelines closely to ensure that your case report is easy to read and understand. The abstract should be short, to the point and interesting to invoke reader's interest in the case report.<sup>1</sup> This should be followed by keywords which represent the article and can be used for indexing.<sup>1</sup> The introduction should provide background information on the condition being described and the purpose of the case report. The case presentation should provide a detailed description of the patient's condition and treatment, including any relevant diagnostic tests and results. The discussion should analyze the case and provide insights on the diagnosis, treatment, and outcome. The discussion should signify why this case report is important for medical community and its implication on current clinical practice.<sup>3</sup> The conclusion should summarize the main points of the case report and discuss any implications for future practice. Case Report (CARE) guidelines has been developed for formulating and critical appraisal of case reports. These guidelines are widely accepted by journals as an accepted format of Case reports.<sup>4</sup>

Use clear and concise language: A case report should be written in clear and concise language that is easy for other healthcare professionals to understand. Use active voice, avoid jargon and technical language, and define any unfamiliar terms.

Include relevant images and diagrams: In many cases, images and diagrams can help to illustrate the key points of your case report. These might include photographs of the patient, radiographic images, or diagrams of diagnostic or treatment procedures. Be sure to obtain permission from the patient or the patient's legal guardian before including any images in your report. Pay attention to the requirements of the journal regarding size and resolution of the images. Make sure to take good quality photos with a plain background in good lighting.

Cite relevant literature: A case report should be based on the most current and relevant literature available. Be sure to include citations for any studies or articles that you reference in your report and use a consistent citation style throughout.

Review and revise the case report: After writing the initial draft, it is important to review and revise the report to ensure that it is accurate, well-written, and follows the guidelines of the journal to which it is being submitted. This may involve seeking feedback from colleagues or engaging a professional editor.

Submit the case report: Once the case report has been

**Table 1:** A sample list of journals specifically publishing only case reports and case series

Serial No.	Name of the Journal	Subject	Web Address
1	BMJ Case Reports	All subjects	<a href="https://casereports.bmj.com/pages/">https://casereports.bmj.com/pages/</a>
2	American Journal of Case Reports	All subjects	<a href="https://amjcaserep.com/">https://amjcaserep.com/</a>
3	Clinical Medicine Insights: Case Report	All subjects	<a href="https://journals.sagepub.com/home/ICR">https://journals.sagepub.com/home/ICR</a>
4	Oxford Medical Case Reports	All subjects	<a href="https://academic.oup.com/omcr">https://academic.oup.com/omcr</a>
5	SAGE Open Medical Case Reports	All subjects	<a href="https://journals.sagepub.com/home/sco">https://journals.sagepub.com/home/sco</a>
6	International Journal of Surgery Case Reports	Surgery	<a href="https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/international-journal-of-surgery-case-reports">https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/international-journal-of-surgery-case-reports</a>
7	International Medical Case Reports Journal	All subjects	<a href="https://www.dovepress.com/international-medical-case-reports-journal-archive46">https://www.dovepress.com/international-medical-case-reports-journal-archive46</a>
8	Case Reports in Oncology	Oncology	<a href="https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/239061">https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/239061</a>
9	Case Reports in Neurology	Neurology	<a href="https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/238704">https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/238704</a>
10	Case Reports in Gastroenterology	Gastroenterology	<a href="https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/232833">https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/232833</a>
11	Respiratory Medicine Case Reports	Pulmonology	<a href="https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/respiratory-medicine-case-reports">https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/respiratory-medicine-case-reports</a>
12	Clinical Case Reports	All subjects	<a href="https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/20500904">https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/20500904</a>
13	Case Reports in Dermatology	Dermatology	<a href="https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/239060">https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/239060</a>
14	Case Reports in Ophthalmology	Ophthalmology	<a href="https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/251887">https://www.karger.com/Journal/Home/251887</a>
15	Journal of Radiology Case Reports	Radiology	<a href="https://www.radiologycases.com/index.php/radiologycases">https://www.radiologycases.com/index.php/radiologycases</a>

reviewed and revised, it is ready to be submitted to a medical journal for publication. Be sure to follow the submission guidelines of the journal, including any formatting requirements and the process for submitting the report. Most medical journals use a peer-review process to evaluate the quality and relevance of submitted case reports. Be sure to follow the journal's guidelines for the submission process and be open to feedback and revisions from the reviewers. In recent times, many journals dedicated only to publishing case reports have been launched. A sample list is displayed in Table 1. However, it is important to identify and avoid predatory journals.<sup>5</sup> Before submitting, ensure that the journal has clear peer review guidelines, the publisher is easily identified and can be contacted easily and journal's website is updated and latest articles are easily accessible to avoid predatory journals.<sup>5</sup>

By following these guidelines, you can write a clear and informative case report that will be of interest to your colleagues and contribute to the body of knowledge in your field.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Funding Source:** None

## References

1. Rison RA. A guide to writing case reports for the Journal of Medical Case Reports and BioMed Central Research Notes. *J Med Case Rep.* 2013;7(1):239. doi: 10.1186/1752-1947-7-239. PMID: 24283456; PMCID: PMC3879062.
2. Cocanour CS. Informed consent-It's more than a signature on a piece of paper. *Am J Surg.* 2017; 214(6): 993-997. doi: 10.1016/j.amjsurg.2017.09.015. PMID: 28974311.
3. Grapsa J. How to Write Your First Clinical Case Report. *JACC Case Rep.* 2022;4(21):1456-1458. doi: 10.1016/j.jaccas.2022.09.016. PMID: 36388705; PMCID: PMC9663984.
4. Riley DS, Barber MS, Kienle GS, Aronson JK, von Schoen-Angerer T, Tugwell P et al. CARE guidelines for case reports: explanation and elaboration document. *J Clin Epidemiol.* 2017;89(1):218-235. doi: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2017.04.026. PMID: 28529185.
5. Rison RA, Shepphird JK, Kidd MR. How to choose the best journal for your case report. *J Med Case Rep.* 2017;11(1):198. doi: 10.1186/s13256-017-1351-y. Erratum in: *J Med Case Rep.* 2017;11(1):287. PMID: 28732524; PMCID: PMC5522590.