

Selecting, Writing Case Reports (Publish or Perish)

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Is this a potential case report?

- Uncommon presentation of a common disease
- Typical presentation of a rare disease
- A new disease

Identifying cases

- Consider the total differential for the presentation (textbook, literature search, talk to consultants)
- Pursue explanation for “unexplained” findings
- Think horses, then zebras

Types of case reports

- Full case reports
- Images (with legends)
- Quiz
- Clinical Vignette
- Multiple choice questions
- Letter to editor

Anatomy of a case report

- Background/Introduction/Abstract
- Case report
- Discussion
- Summary/Learning points
- References

Case presentation

- 3 Include relevant details
- 3 Be concise yet comprehensive
- 3 Remember the difference between “spoken” and “written” language
- 3 Make a logical chronologic sequence

Discussion

- 3 What's different and how
- 3 How did diagnostic/therapeutic plans differ from previous reports
- 3 Make it flow
- 3 Include relevant references - ask yourself

Writing tips

- 3 Use active voice over passive voice
- 3 Avoid jargon, abbreviations and invented words; use plain simple English (KISS principle- Keep It Simple Stupid !!)
- 3 Avoid long sentences
- 3 Avoid redundancy
- 3 Restrict to word limit

Plan your publication

- 3 Cater content to reader
- 3 Select journal/s
- 3 Free-write, then revise/edit
- 3 Select literature and references germane to your specific case

Journal selection

- Type of case – who would be interested ?
- Narrow choice to 3-4 journals
- Look over case reports from those journals – which compares with your case ?
- Select journals realistically

Review

- Look at and read your case report in print
- Get it reviewed by all contributors - in time
- Attempt unity and coherence in writing
- Avoid spelling mistakes !!!

Submission process

- Write a good cover letter
- Attempt online submission, when possible - quicker turnaround time and cheaper
- Check specific journal requirements and comply
- Figures - check format required - .jpeg, .tiff

Useful resources

- The Elements of Style
- AMA Manual of Style
- The Chicago Manual of Style

