

The Role of Case Reports in Research and Education

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A case report is a detailed description of the signs, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment and outcome of a patient. It usually contains the demographic profile of the patient and often an unusual or rare presentation with or without a literature review. Due to intrinsic limitations, case reports are given a low priority in the hierarchy of clinical importance and therefore are generally considered anecdotal evidence [1, 2]. Many journals thus do not publish case reports, while others may restrict the number that appears in print. This is because reports have an adverse effect on the journal's impact factor as they are not highly cited. However, it should be noted that case reports have useful roles in presenting and managing new or unusual entities [3]. They may facilitate recognition of new diseases or present beneficial or adverse effects of treatments [4]. For instance, recognition of administration of thalidomide to mothers and the resultant adverse malformations in their babies was a report of significant interest by McBride in the *Lancet* in 1961 [5]. William MacIntyre reported a case of multiple myeloma back in 1840 and Barnard in his case report described the world's first heart transplant.

Case reports can also help understand rare diseases, as well as unusual presentations in known diseases. Case reports can also play a relevant role in medical education, providing a structure for case-based learning [3-5]. Thus, as we can see case reports may present novelty and coin new drugs, introduce materials or novel techniques and therefore remain to be one of the cornerstones of progress in medicine by providing new ideas and management [6]. Thus, it is prudent to have a journal dedicated to this end.

References

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