

Case Report Communications to a Scientific Journal: An Insight

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Abstract This editorial reemphasizes the importance of case report communications to a scientific medical journal. It defines a case report, the content of a case study, significance and contribution of medical case reports to the advancement of medicine and medical education. This editorial also presents in brief the beneficial role of case communications in preventing and controlling the emergence of epidemics and pandemics in the public health perspective.

Keywords: case reports, scientific journal, public health

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1. Introduction

Case reports in medicine and allied sciences can be defined as those scientific communications that describe the discovery of a new disease, unusual clinical presentation of an established disease/ infection, newly observed therapeutic complication/side effect of a chemotherapeutic agent, newer diagnostic approach, and success of treating a clinical condition in an alternate method using different technology/pharmacological agent. [1] A case (from Latin *casus*) meaning an event/happening/occurrence is used to describe not the patient but the clinical condition he is suffering from. [2] There would be many dimensions of defining a case communication with respect to various subjects of medical sciences including the anatomy, surgery, pediatrics, dermatology, orthopedics, infectious diseases, psychiatry and others. Case reports normally are not observations of a single case, but a cluster of such incidences (case series) related to a particular aspect of a disease/infection. Case reports of any type will be considered as contributing necessary tools in developing hierarchies for the management of various clinical conditions hitherto difficult with available literature and thereby complementing the current knowledge on the subject and help in evolving new strategies and insights in to evidence-based medicine [3].

2. Significance of Case Reports in Medical Literature

Case reports describing a single or a series of case presentations necessarily form the basis for first documentary evidence related to a particular infectious

disease that has the ability to outbreak in future to epidemics/pandemics and such early descriptions would be useful for future planning regarding the necessary action to be taken to prevent and control. There have been such descriptions of infectious diseases (malaria, plague, syphilis) in ancient literature [4,5].

Documentation of case reports assume greater significance in public health perspective where infectious diseases like the influenza, which spreads across continents are difficult to contain without adequate first hand information on its possible emergence and other related matter regarding the mode of spread and the intensity of the disease in terms of morbidity and mortality it causes. [6] Previous studies have highlighted the importance of case report documentation in the management of various clinical conditions to medical practitioners by providing them up-to-date knowledge. [7,8,9,10] It is opined that case reports normally should be made by specialists/clinicians/medical practitioners in their subjects, communications regarding their personal observations related to patient care and management, outcome of a newer drug therapy, unusual presentations, and possible success with alternate methodology of treatment that forms basis for future preparedness. [11] Clinical case reports of rare medical syndromes are hindered by ethical issues, financial constraints and statistical limitations [12].

3. Reporting a Single Case

There is a feeling that a single case report does not add significantly to the literature, and most of the journals discourage such communications. But one should not undermine such case reports as they describe possible newer predisposing factors, different morphological features of a microorganism, that is already an established

infectious disease agent as in case of *Kingella kingae* which normally causes invasive disease in pediatric age group and rarely isolated from adult patients. [13,14,15] It should be noted that isolated case reports of parasitic infections reinvent the possible prevalence of the parasite hitherto unknown in that geographical region and throw a light on probable underlying causes and laboratory methods to employ in diagnosing and treating such infections [16,17,18].

4. Conclusion

Though case reports describing a single case cannot be generalized to the public at large, it certainly adds to the already available knowledge. Emphasis on how to present a case, what should be considered as a genuine case report was described in detail in previous studies. [19,20] Cases detailing on a newer therapeutic agent and its adverse effects, reports defining a newer or an emerging and reemerging microorganism, case report describing advanced technology in diagnosing and management of a disease, communications on an abnormal presentation of a common clinical condition should be encouraged for publication as case reports in medical journals.

The American Journal of Medical Case Reports is an international peer reviewed open access scientific medical journal published by Science and Education Publications (SiEP) that is devoted to publish cases describing cause and pathogenesis of a disease/infection, monitoring medication and its side effects, drawing attention of medical community to a potentially new, emerging and reemerging microorganisms/infectious agents, unusual presentation of a common illness, uncommon syndromes, evidence and newer insights in to treatment and management of diseases, advanced technology and innovative methods of diagnosis.

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