

EDITORIAL**Case Reports: Stories Worth Telling in Today`s
Bone and Joint Literature**

Ali Moradi, PhD; Mohammad H. Ebrahimzadeh, MD

The Archives of Bone & Joint Surgery

Although medical literature has been evolutionized through many centuries from personal observations, communications, and case reports to the current era of evidence-based medicine and randomized clinical trials, some short and simple reports still seem worthy for publication provided that they substantially contribute to the modern science of medicine.

Case reports are comprehensive delineations of unfamiliar manifestations, critical argumentative diagnoses, reasonable therapeutic interventions, and evaluation of outcomes of rare single or few cases of a clinical condition. The infrequent paranormal modalities of such unique unseen or less-seen clinical circumstances make case reports poorly evidenced and cited, which in turn disinclines the publishing authorities to welcome them. Nonetheless, the extent of a physician's expertise is revealed where they encounter curious circumstances that need true *ijtihad* and professionalism in medical practice rather than simple recall of memorized knowledge for ordinary routine applications.

Precise description of the case/s, concise review of the related literature, rationalized workflow and decision making along with the outcomes, and suggestions for improving are requirements for particularly an orthopedic systematic description for publication (1).

Although case reports are ranked in the bottommost level of evidence hierarchy, they are frontiers of evidence collection (2, 3). Multiple reports of a particular case can lead to build up a case control study to elucidate and confirm the inter-relationships between the observed

variables. Hence, case reports are to be rehabilitated in medical literature as valuable sources of contribution to lifelong learning provided that they possess a coherent scientific structure.

Case reports are professional detailed stories. Despite enormous improvements in orthopedic practice, there are still many new stories in bone and joint care that are worth telling. Although the common assumption in orthopedic surgery is that nearly all major diagnoses are well defined by far, however, considering the improvements in diagnostic technologies, introduction of novel entities can still be anticipated. Innovative approaches to rare or even some common orthopedic cases can potentially be published as informative case reports (4). The most common types of reports include: illnesses with very rare occurrences, unusual presentation of a condition, uncommon combination of conditions, new aspects of mechanisms of injury, and challenges necessitating novel management of a condition. Peculiar results of a treatment, unpredictable events, complications after surgery, outcomes of unprecedented treatments, and lessons learned are also among the stories that worth telling as a clinical vignette (5-7).

Complexity, proper data collection, justified diagnosis, and legitimate intervention as well as appropriate language, punctuation, and syntax are key factors in evaluating the eligibility of a case report for publication. A case report must clearly reflect the author's reputation and proficiency in both practice and writing.

Corresponding Author: Ali Moradi, Orthopedic Research Center, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Ghaem Hospital, Mashhad, Iran
Email: ralimoradi@gmail.com



THE ONLINE VERSION OF THIS ARTICLE
[ABJS.MUMS.AC.IR](http://abjs.mums.ac.ir)

References

1. Carleton HA, Webb ML. The case report in context. *Yale J Biol Med.* 2012; 85(1):93-6.
2. Green BN, Johnson CD. How to write a case report for publication. *J Chiropr Med.* 2006; 5(2):72-82.
3. Sun Z. Tips for writing a case report for the novice author. *J Med Radiat Sci.* 2013; 60(3):108-13.
4. Kilinc AS, Ebrahimzadeh MH, Lafosse L. Subacromial internal spacer for rotator cuff tendon repair: "the balloon technique". *Arthroscopy.* 2009; 25(8):921-4.
5. Rosenthal DI. What makes a case report publishable? *Skeletal Radiol.* 2006; 35(9):627-8.
6. Özçakar L, Franchignoni F, Negrini S, Frontera W. Writing a case report for the American Journal of physical medicine & rehabilitation and the European journal of physical and rehabilitation medicine. *Am J Phys Med Rehabil.* 2013; 92(2):183-6.
7. Sharifi SR, Ebrahimzadeh MH, Ahmadzadeh-Chabok H, Khajeh-Mozaffari J. Closed total talus dislocation without fracture: a case report. *Cases J.* 2009; 2(1):9132.