

## HOW TO WRITE A CASE REPORT

A case report is a documentation of a unique, unusual, or newsworthy scientific observation for the purpose of education and research. Cases should possess a notable deviation from the current clinical understanding and observations of physicians. Cases should strive to advance the general understanding of the disorder, improve clinical skills, and/or introduce suggested research. You should always check the guidelines of the journal to which you plan to submit for specific requirements including word limit, format, references, and patient consent forms.

### Components of a Case Report

- **Abstract:** The abstract includes a brief explanation of the clinical questions or problems being addressed in the case report. In addition, a statement summarizing why this case is unusual and noteworthy should be included.
- **Introduction:** The introduction presents the topic of the case report as well as a justification of why the case is worthy of discussion. Relevant background information obtained through a review of the literature should also be included.
- **Case Presentation:** Introduce the patient and provide a history of present illness in chronological order. Only pertinent findings from the physical exam and laboratory/imaging studies should be included. List normal values for less commonly ordered tests.
- **Discussion:** Restate the significance of the particular case and discuss the unusual and striking features of the case. Back up your discussion with additional information obtained from your literature review to support your arguments. Address any contradictory evidence. Emphasize the importance and educational value of the case.
- **Summary/Conclusion/Recommendation:** State the take-home message. You may also address what you would do differently the

next time. Provide recommendations to other clinicians and researchers and consider suggesting possibilities for further study.

- **References:** You must site sources for all historical information discovered by your literature search. Never transfer a reference cited in another article to your own list without reading the cited article critically.

### **Helpful References**

**1. DeBakey L, DeBakey S. The case report I: Guidelines for preparation. *Int J Cardiol* 1983 (Oct); 4 (3): 357-364**

**2. DeBakey, L, DeBakey S. The case report II: Style and Form. *Int J Cardiol* 1984 (Aug); 6 (2): 247-254**

**3. McCarthy L, Reilly K. How to write a case report. *Family Medicine* 2000; 32(3):190-5**