



Ministry of Health  
Sultanate of Oman

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**Directorate of Planning & Studies  
Al Buraimi Governorate**

# **WRITING A CASE REPORT**

**A quick Guide for Medical Professionals**

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# GOALS OF A CASE REPORT

Writing a case report is a great opportunity to share an interesting case with your work colleagues. An appropriate case could be a rare disease you've encountered, but could also be an unusual presentation of a common illness. The idea is to present a unique topic that could be of benefit to the reader. Doing a quick literature search before deciding may help you determine if your case is unique. Importantly, a case report is a wonderful way for a medical professionals and students to try their hand at scientific writing, and perhaps **gain a publication in the process!**

**The goals of a case report divided into cases that focus on different categories: diseases, diagnoses, treatments, and systems ( Rison 2013).**

● **Diseases:** A number of criteria can be helpful to think about when selecting an appropriate case to write up; consider selecting a patient with a disease of unknown etiology, an atypical clinical course, or a rare disease.

○ In pediatrics, congenital defects or previously uncharacterized anatomical anomalies are of particular relevance.

● **Diagnoses:** If the path to diagnosing your patient was particularly challenging or there were a few pitfalls in the work up, your summary of this process could help others avoid the same mistake. While the goal is not necessarily to write a case in the same style as a “morbidity and mortality” case presentation, walking readers through the errors made and how they were identified and addressed may prevent similar errors by other clinicians.

○ Providing the reader with the original differential diagnoses considered and before arriving at the final diagnosis increases the utility of the report.

● **Treatment:** Similarly, a case in which the treatment had an unexpected effect, or in which the setting of care was unusual, may be a good candidate for a case report. Adverse or unexpected drug reactions would also be appropriate. Lastly, consider selecting a case that captures a clinical situation that would be impossible to replicate due to ethical reasons. For these scenarios, case reports are a particularly important learning source.

● **Health System:** Cases that are rich with learning points, even regarding the systems healthcare professionals must navigate to provide quality care, are valuable and worth sharing. Remember that ultimately, case reports should be educational in nature. The most useful reports cover a particular patient story, but branch out into broader teaching points that help provide that particular case with context and meaning.

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# STEPS TO WRITE A CASE REPORT



## STEP 1

Identifying a unique or exciting case is the first step towards writing an excellent case report

## STEP 2

Discuss the case with colleagues and head of department

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# STEP 3

## OBTAINING CONSENT

To write and publish a case report **you are not required to obtain approval from the regional research committee**. Once you have determined the case, the next step is to approach the patient and obtain his/her signed consent. **This step is important and legally necessary.**

The following will provide you with information on how to explain the benefits and importance of a case report, how to obtain consent, and the necessary information you have to provide to the patient.

● Explaining the importance of case reports

○ Why do you want to publish it?

○ Who may it help in the future?

■ If the patient had a long road to the diagnosis or trouble with treatment, a case report may be the first step in helping future patients avoid those troubles.

○ A case report is the first step in helping to find key signs and symptoms to make future diagnoses simpler.

● Information the patient needs to know

○ Explain that any identifiable information that is not essential to the report will not be included.

○ If the disease is rare or the case report is read broadly, explain that this could potentially lead to identification of the patient, even though no identifiable information is included .

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# STEP 4

## WRITING THE REPORT

Sitting down and writing a draft is an enjoying part! Break your draft into appropriate sections. **The sections of the paper vary depending on where you are submitting your case report.** Before you start drafting your report:

- 1- Chose the journal you want to publish in
- 2- Download its submission guideline
- 3- Read samples of case reports published in the same journal
- 4- Start to write according to the journal guideline

Start with bullet points. Obtain feedback from your team , and when you feel like you have a complete case, start putting it together into paragraph form. Remember this is not a patient's note. Take care not to have fragments, especially in the history: a subject and verb needs to be in every sentence. "No rales, rhonchi, or wheezes," is not a sentence ( Rison et al.2017,Cohen 2006).

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## **STEP 5**

### **Edit the Report**

After you have completed the case report, have your team edit the report. It is also valuable to ask someone outside of your team to read your report for an external perspective. This is a good opportunity to identify areas that need further explanation to someone who is not familiar with your patient.

## **STEP 6**

### **Obtain Approval of Hospital Director**

The final report should be reviewed by your hospital director before submitting to the journal for publication. Another copy also should be sent to research department at directorate of planning and studies.

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## GOOD ARTICLES & WEBSITES FOR READING

- How to choose the best journal for your case report.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5522590/>
- How to write a case report for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2647062/>
- BMJ Case Reports. <https://casereports.bmj.com/pages/>
- Clinical Case Reports - Wiley Online Library.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/20500904>
- SAGE Open Medical Case Reports. <https://journals.sagepub.com/loi/sco>

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## REFERENCES

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- 3- Cohen H.2006. How to write a patient case report. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*.63,pp:1888-1892.

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