

# Writing a Case Report Worth Publishing

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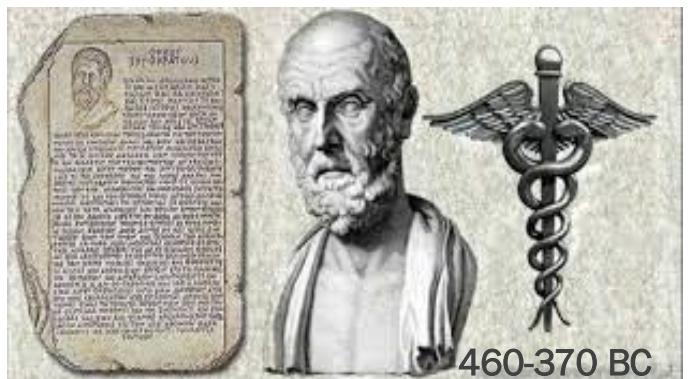
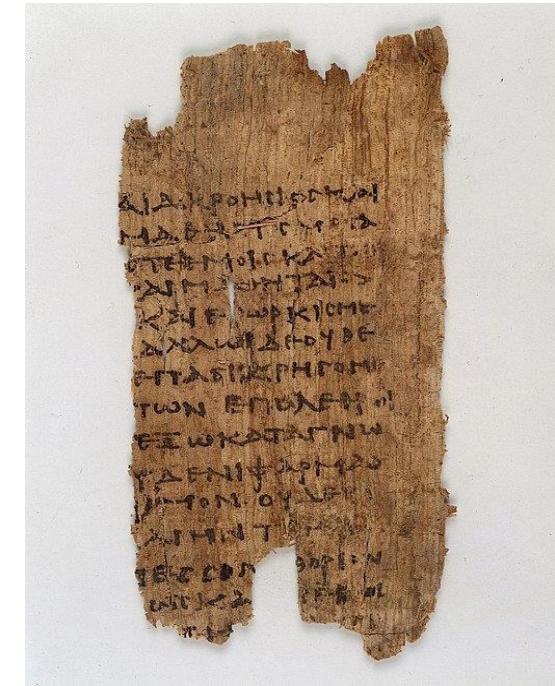
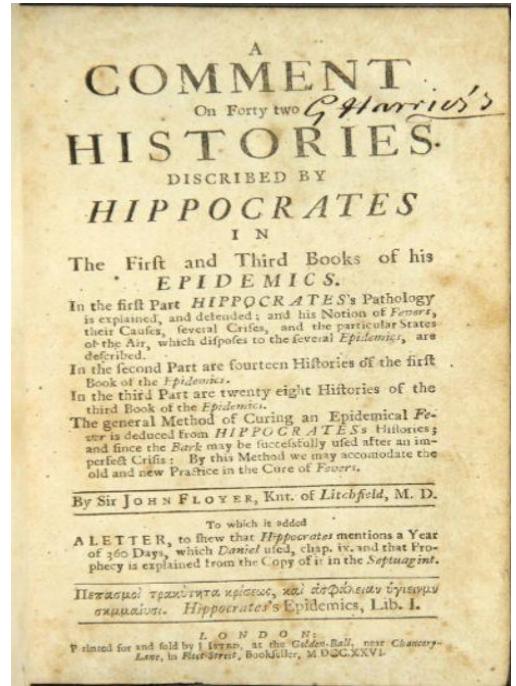


# AGENDA

- Benefits of a case report
- What makes a case report publishable?
- Obtaining a patient consent
- Stages of writing a case report- focus on Abstract elements
- Writing guidelines for case reports
- Tips on submission for publication & resources



Management of Breast Cancer has been described by ancient Egyptians in the “Edwin Smith Papyrus” 2500-3000BCE



Case Reports are Ancient...

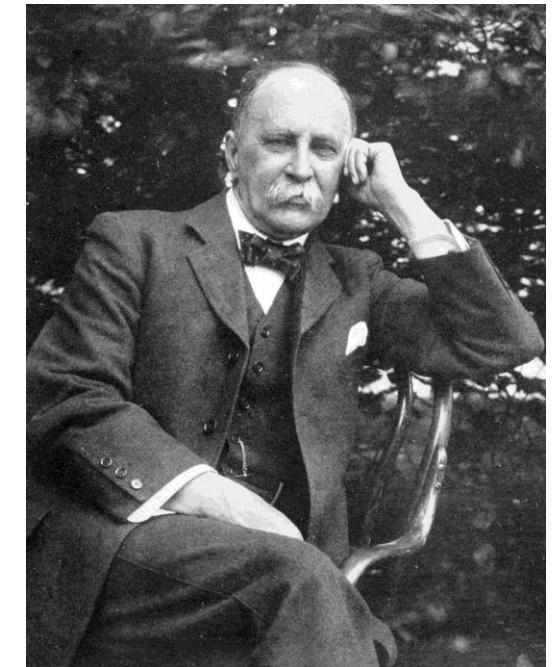


## Identifying an Appropriate Case

*“An appropriate case for a case report is a common manifestation of an unusual disorder or an uncommon manifestation of a common disorder.”*

-Sr. William Osler

The Father of Modern Medicine



# Guidelines for Writing a Case Report?



CARE Checklist (2013) of information to include when writing a case report

(CC) BY-NC-ND

Topic	Item	Checklist item description	Reported on Page
Title	1	The words "case report" should be in the title along with the area of focus .....	
Key Words	2	2 to 5 key words that identify areas covered in this case report .....	
Abstract	3a	Introduction—What is unique about this case? What does it add to the medical literature? .....	
	3b	The main symptoms of the patient and the important clinical findings .....	
	3c	The main diagnoses, therapeutics interventions, and outcomes .....	
	3d	Conclusion—What are the main "take-away" lessons from this case? .....	
Introduction	4	One or two paragraphs summarizing why this case is unique with references .....	
Patient Information	5a	De-identified demographic information and other patient specific information .....	
	5b	Main concerns and symptoms of the patient .....	
	5c	Medical, family, and psychosocial history including relevant genetic information (also see timeline) .....	
	5d	Relevant past interventions and their outcomes .....	
Clinical Findings	6	Describe the relevant physical examination (PE) and other significant clinical findings .....	
Timeline	7	Important information from the patient's history organized as a timeline .....	
Diagnostic Assessment	8a	Diagnostic methods (such as PE, laboratory testing, imaging, surveys) .....	
	8b	Diagnostic challenges (such as access, financial, or cultural) .....	
	8c	Diagnostic reasoning including other diagnoses considered .....	
	8d	Prognostic characteristics (such as staging in oncology) where applicable .....	
Therapeutic Intervention	9a	Types of intervention (such as pharmacologic, surgical, preventive, self-care) .....	
	9b	Administration of intervention (such as dosage, strength, duration) .....	
	9c	Changes in intervention (with rationale) .....	
Follow-up and Outcomes	10a	Clinician and patient-assessed outcomes (when appropriate) .....	
	10b	Important follow-up diagnostic and other test results .....	
	10c	Intervention adherence and tolerability (How was this assessed?) .....	
	10d	Adverse and unanticipated events .....	
Discussion	11a	Discussion of the strengths and limitations in your approach to this case .....	
	11b	Discussion of the relevant medical literature .....	
	11c	The rationale for conclusions (including assessment of possible causes) .....	
	11d	The primary "take-away" lessons of this case report .....	
Patient Perspective	12	When appropriate the patient should share their perspective on the treatments they received .....	
Informed Consent	13	Did the patient give informed consent? Please provide if requested .....	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

***"The CARE guidelines help increase the completeness, accuracy, and transparency of published case reports"***

**CARE guidelines** 

**Brief reports providing scientific observations on:**

- unique presentation & clinical diagnosis
- novel management or therapeutic
- unexpected outcome or adverse effects





# Main Reasons to Publish a Case Report



Scholarly project –  
meeting requirements



Entry point in research  
& precursor to larger  
studies



Practice research  
writing skills &  
documenting the case



Complex or rare cases  
of valuable learning  
points



Personal satisfaction &  
enhancing CV



Altruistic intentions:  
benefiting the world!



# Case Reports Stakeholders

- Patients
- Clinicians
- Researchers
- Hospitals & clinics
- Educators
- Policy makers
- Healthcare industry representatives



# Preparation for Writing a Case Report

- Is the case unique?
- Is the case publishable?
- Appropriate journal identification
- Obtainable patient consent

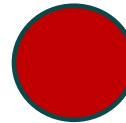


# Is this Case Publishable?



- Unique Case
- New disease or syndrome
- Unexpected association
- New insight into disease
- Critical clinical findings

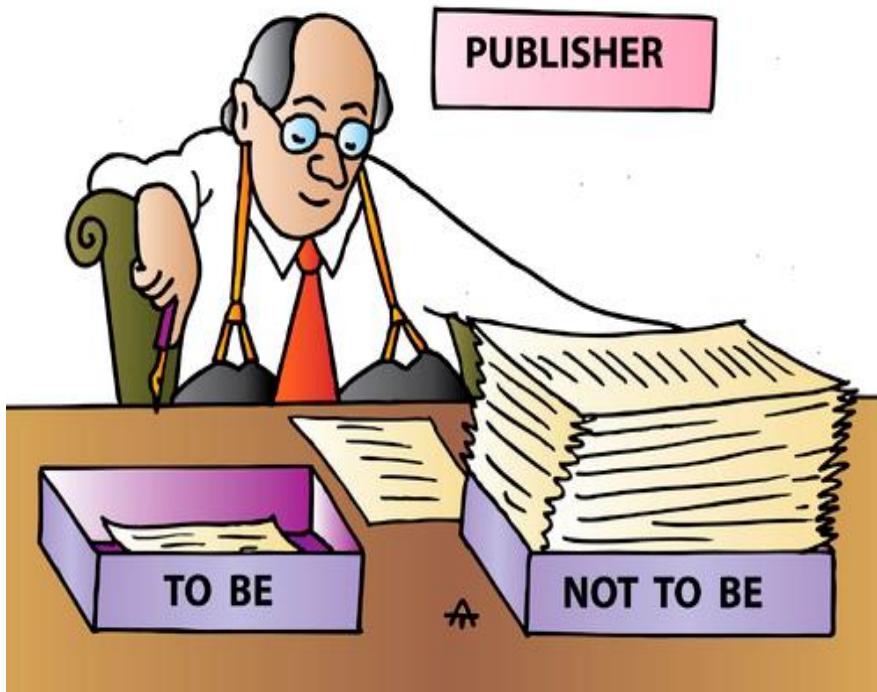
- New Rx
- Rare or novel adverse reaction or side effect
- Unusual harm or complication from Rx



- New procedure or RX modality
- Unusual prognosis



# Rule of Thumb for Publishing

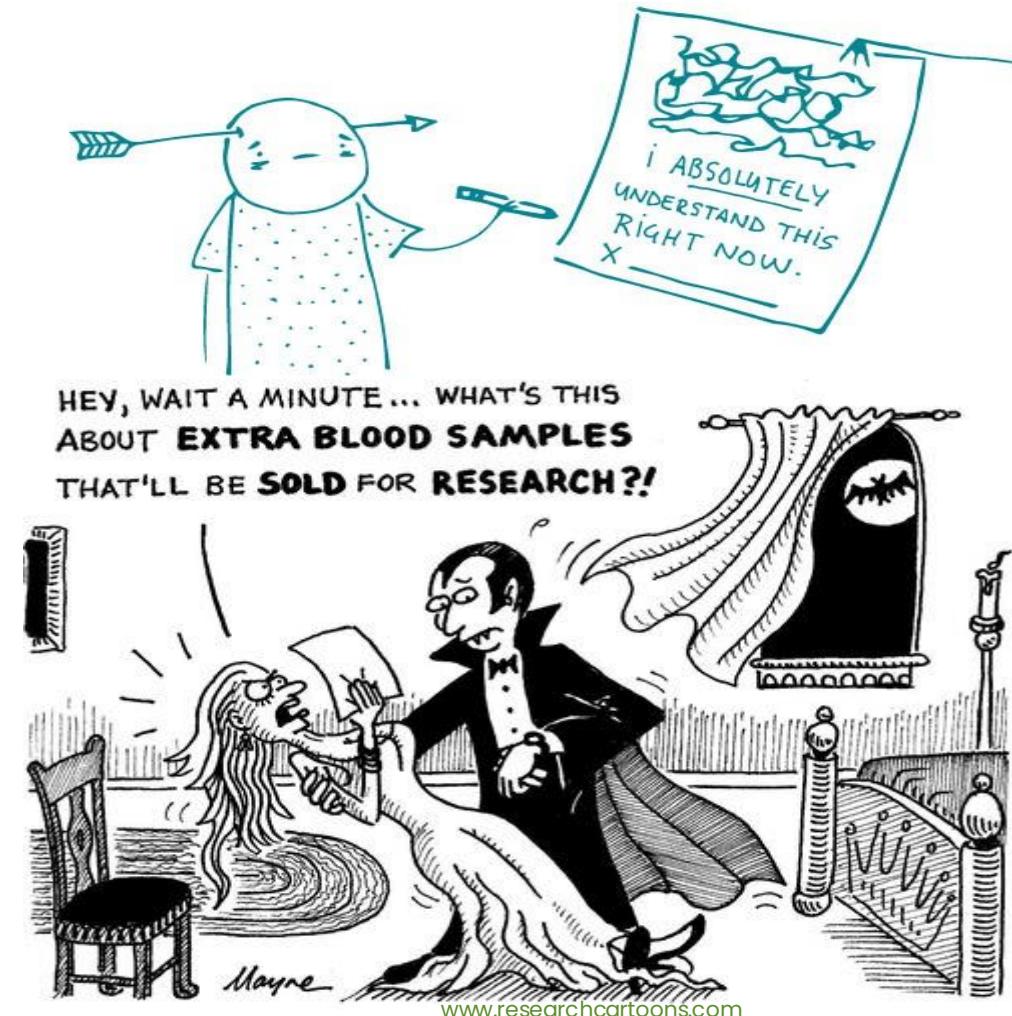


- A case that has been reported 4-6 times or less is appropriate for publication
- If case has unique and unusual features, barely found in the literature, then, it is necessary to publish



# Obtaining Patient Consent

- Required written consent from competent patient or legal representative
- No coercion, misinformation, or deceit
- Protect identification of patient
- Follow HIPPA guidelines



# Obtaining Consent from the Dead

- Get consent from closest kin or legal rep
- If the deceased kin or rep cannot be reached
  - Write case report but de-identify any personal health information (PHI)



- Name
- DOB (no exact age, state age-group instead e.g., "in his 60s")
- Geographic location & race- avoid mentioning geographic area or hospital affiliation



# Preparatory Steps for Writing a Case Report

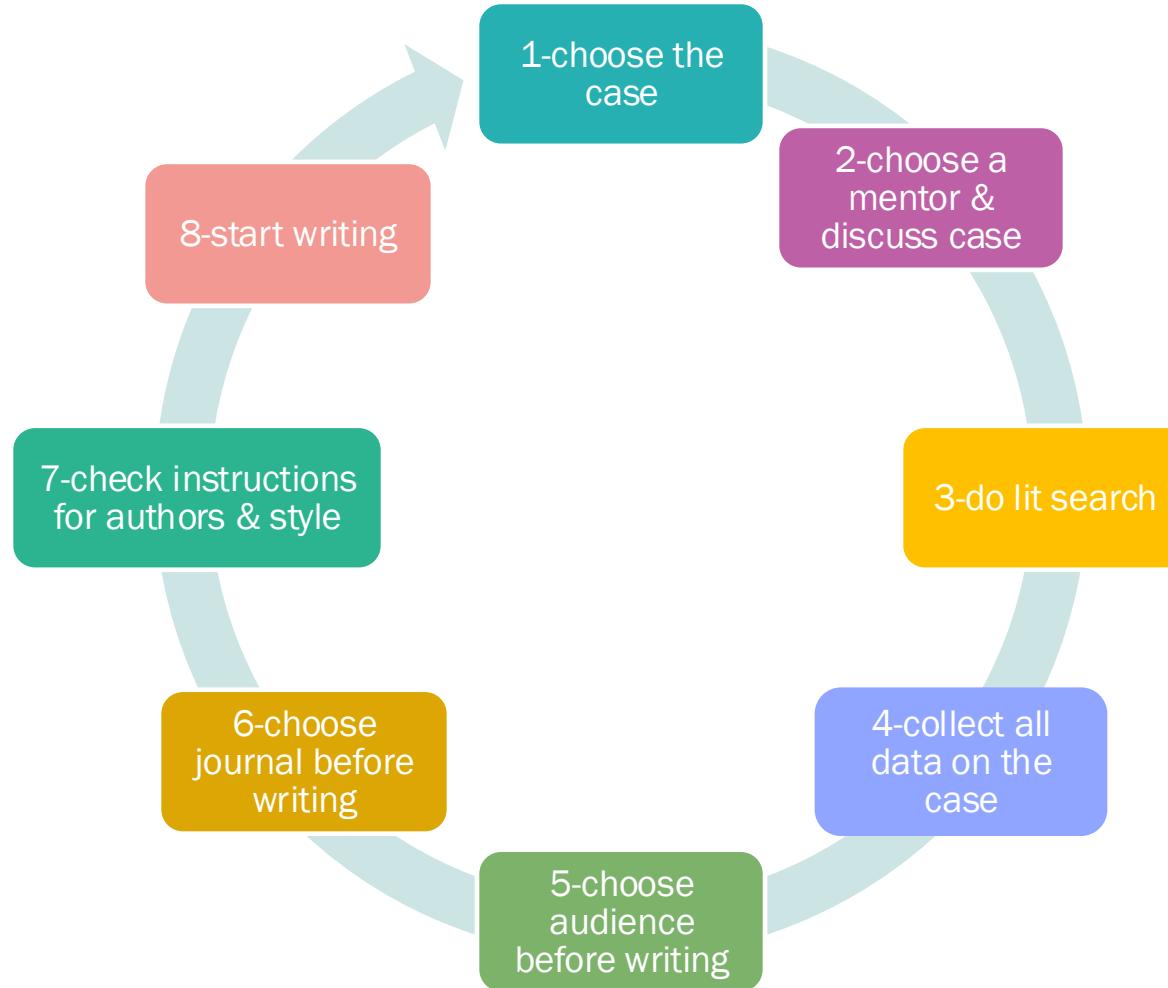
- Identify a journal
- Review “Instruction for Authors”
- Read several case reports from selected journals to gain insight on structure, composition, detail, etc.



Instructions for Authors



# Stages of Writing Case Reports



# Content of a Clinical Case Report

- Introduction
- Case Description
- Discussion [Conclusions]
- Literature review
- Summary/conclusion
- References



## For Abstracts

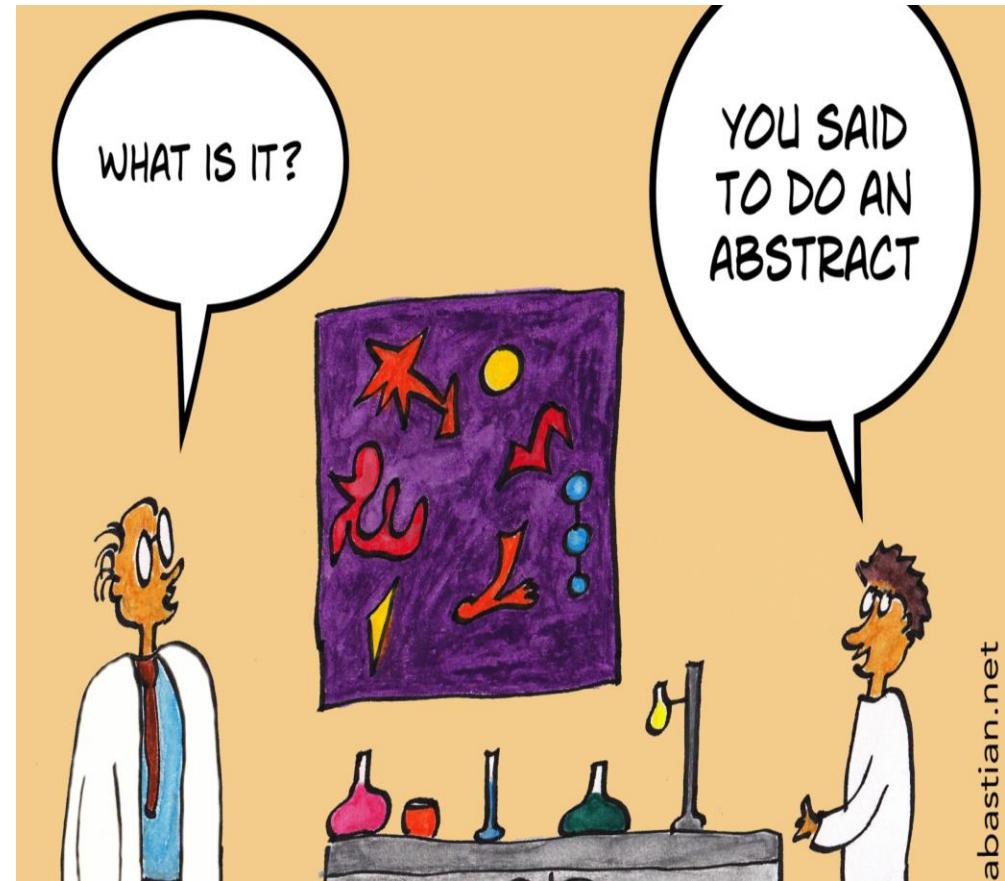
### Abstract of a clinical vignette

A brief and vivid illustration or snapshot of the case that discloses the condition progressively by using one clinical clue after another



# Case Report Abstract = Clinical Vignette

- ~250-350 words
- Introduction: Epi, significance, rationale
- Case Description:
  - Presenting concerns
  - Diagnosis
  - Interventions
  - Outcomes
- Discussion/Conclusion: learning points



# “Title” of a Case Report

- Informative, communicate salient points
- Include “searchable” terms, keywords
- Not too declarative or vague, a bit mysterious is ok
- The words “Case Report” should be in title

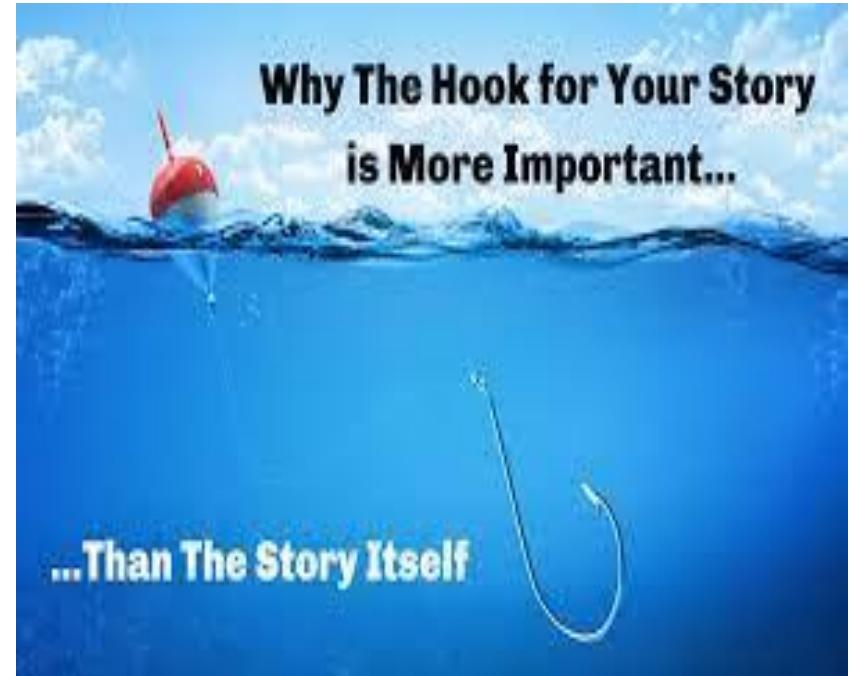
## Terms related to Title:

Unusual or Atypical Presentation (symptoms, causes); Rare, Unusual, Uncommon Case, Manifestation, Finding; Challenging Diagnosis; Complications; Treatment Management.



# “Introduction”

- Brief overview of the larger problem addressed by the case
- Epidemiology & significance based on lit.
- Clinical Importance, what is special about the case- **the hook!**
- **Recommended:** reviewing introductions of similar Case Reports



## Fictional Example- “Introduction/Background”

“XYZ” is a life-threatening condition characterized by... affecting 1% of “subpopulation.” Despite the absence of a definitive cure for this condition, prompt diagnosis and timely surgical intervention have been correlated with a 36% survival rate. We report/present a case of.... (or this case report shows how using....)



# “Case Description”

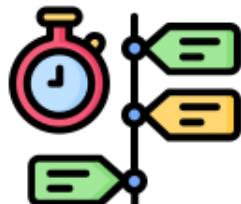
Description of the patient, presenting condition

Current medical, social & family Hx

Physical exam & relevant test results

Initial Dx, Rx, Clinical course

Expected/actual outcome; prognosis; & F/U plan



## “Case Description”

Succinct with only important items

Provide values for unusual lab or imaging tests

Few tables/images if needed or allowed



<https://www.cartoonstock.com/cartoon?searchID=CC132110>

*“You tested positive for being negative.”*



## “Case Description”

### *Selecting Relevant Facts*



Not allowed to hide facts that run counter your main conclusion



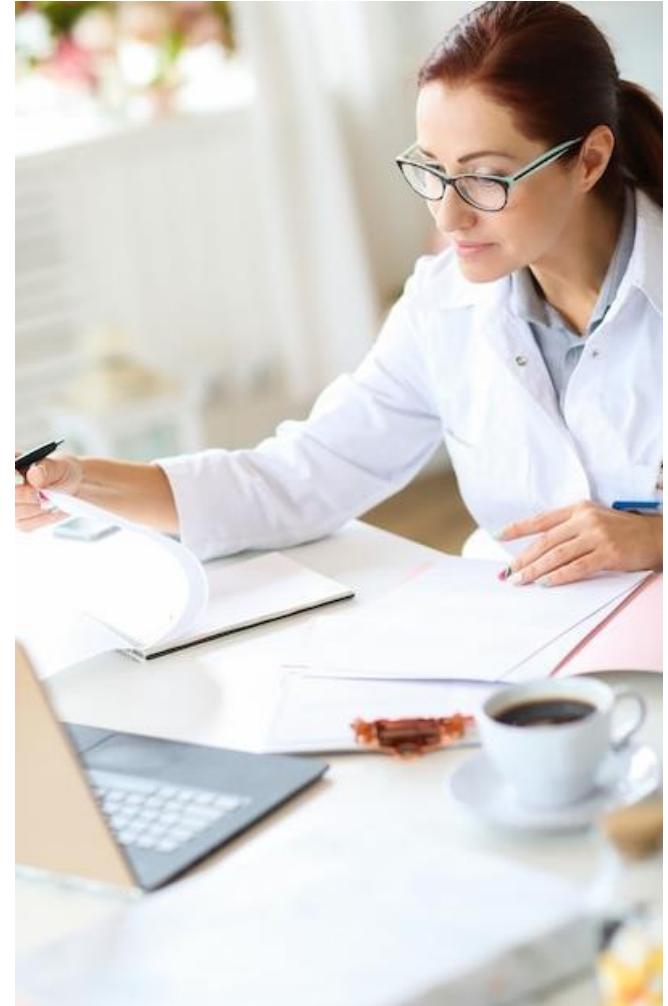
Do not emphasize irrelevant facts. Only Pertinent +/- labs & findings



Differential diagnosis walk



Include 1-2 images to keep readers engaged- if space allowed (use arrows)



<b>Patient demographics (age, gender, nationality, etc.)</b>	"A 35-year-old man"; "a 1-month-old infant"; "a 12-year-old Somali girl," etc.
<b>Presenting symptoms</b>	"Demonstrated typical signs and symptoms of Huntington's Disease"; "presented to the hospital with severe chest pain"; "experienced a burning sensation due to swollen leg muscles"
<b>History of problems/symptoms</b>	"Reported a long history of asthma"; "had a family history of colon cancer on the maternal side"; "reported that inflammation had begun one year prior"
<b>Diagnoses</b>	"Based on the characteristic appearance of the cutaneous lesions, a diagnosis of granuloma annulare was made"; "a clinical diagnosis of chronic respiratory disease was made"; "intestinal lesions were consistent with severe Crohn's Disease"
<b>Treatment</b>	"The patient was immediately intubated and antitubercular therapy was initiated"; "treatment was initiated with low-dose corticosteroids, anticoagulants, and vasodilators"
<b>Procedures</b>	"Following kidney biopsy, renal cysts were excised laparoscopically"; "the patient underwent three skin grafts"; "an emergency arteriogram showed smooth segmental narrowing and bilateral vasospasm"
<b>Complications/challenges</b>	"Additional history revealed that he had been ingesting ergotamine preparations for a number of years to relieve chronic muscle pain"; "laparoscopic access to the duodenum was inhibited by intra-abdominal fat"
<b>Outcomes</b>	"patient was asymptomatic on subsequent visits," "although scapular swelling subsided, she continued to report severe back pain for the following month," "...resulting in significant functional limitation. She was unable to return to work for approximately 12 days."

# “Discussion”



Most important section

Significance of case against the literature  
Compare/contrast

What should colleagues learn?

Diagnosis,  
Management,  
Outcome,  
Prognosis

Clinical implications



# “Discussion” Section



Evaluate case for accuracy, validity & uniqueness



Compare & contrast case with published literature



Derive new knowledge



Summarize essential features



Draw recommendations or clinical implications



# “Conclusion”

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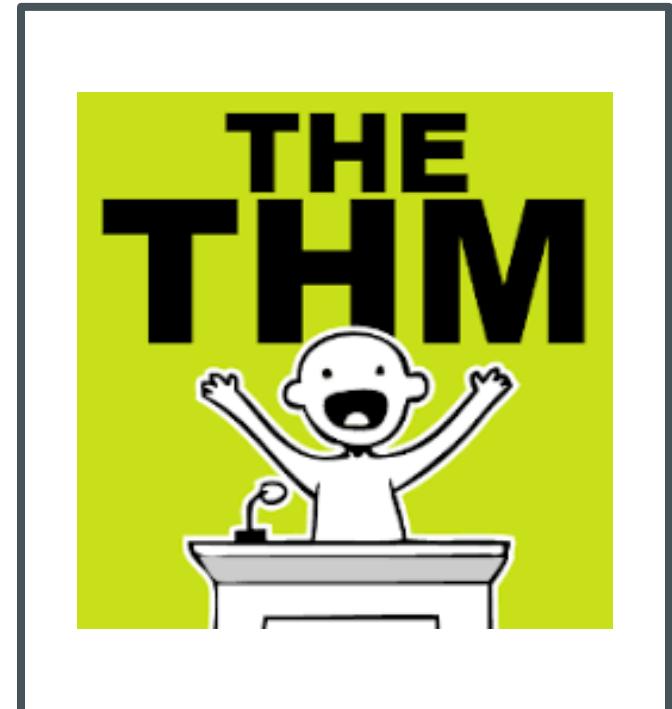
(1-2 sentences)—Support for your argument from literature

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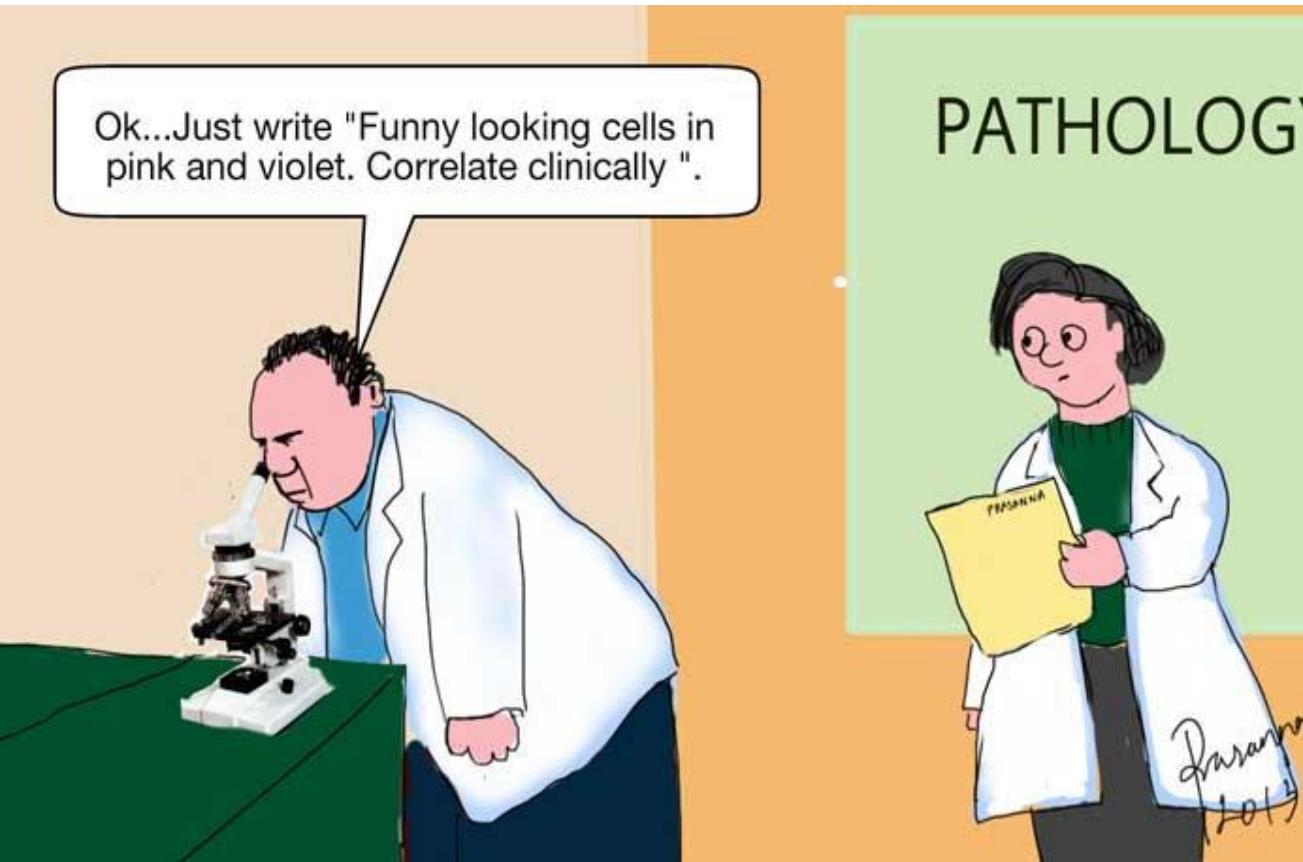
“Take home message” Summarize clinical impact, or implications & suggestions for the clinical practice.

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Suggest precautions or interesting topics for future research.



# Collaboration With Other Consultants



<https://gomerblog.com/2016/12/madmedicine-medical-cartoons-series/>



- Radiologists & Pathologists' input adds credibility
- Residents/students: Faculty & subspecialists add value



# Submission and Publishing

## Journal Requirements:

- Formatting
- Layout of legends & figures
- Tables, figures,  
illustrations, imaging
- Cover letter



# Writing the Draft...

## BMJ Case Reports

Submission template for full cases

- All case reports MUST be submitted online using this Word template  
<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/bmjcasereports>
  - You will be asked for more detailed information on submission where you can also upload images, multimedia files, etc
  - Further details are available in the Instructions for authors  
<http://casereports.bmjjournals.org/instructions-for-authors>
- You must have **signed informed consent** from patients (or relatives/guardians) before submitting to BMJ Case Reports. Please anonymise the patient's details as much as possible, eg, specific ages, occupations. Consent forms are available in several languages  
<http://casereports.bmjjournals.org/instructions-for-authors/consentform.pdf>
- You or your institution must be a Fellow of BMJ Case Reports in order to submit. Fellows can submit as many cases as they like, access all the published material, and re-use any published material for personal use and teaching without further permission.
  - For more information on rates and how to purchase your fellowship visit  
<http://casereports.bmjjournals.org/site/about/becomeafellow.xhtml>
  - Contact your librarian or head of department to see if your institution already has a Fellowship

### TITLE OF CASE

Something sensible that really tells you what the case is about

### SUMMARY *Up to 150 words summarising the case presentation and outcome (this will be freely available online)*

We really need a good flavour of the case from this. Emphasise the learning points.

### BACKGROUND *Why you think this case is important – why did you write it up?*

Why is this of interest to our readers? Is this a prevalent health problem? Is there a clear message?

### CASE PRESENTATION *Presenting features, medical/social/family history*

This is the story of what happened to the patient. How did they present? What is the relevant history? Why is this relevant? Explain your findings and how they influenced your management. A brief summary of relevant clinical guidelines in appropriate here. Did you have to make an exception? Did you have to adapt the guidelines?

Do not use abbreviations for diseases or investigations.

Read the case presentation back to yourself. Is there a natural flow from presentation to discharge and follow-up? Are all decisions explained?

Do not be afraid to write about complications. They are universal and learning from each other's experience is key in Medicine. Do discuss these with clarity so that all findings and management decisions are obvious. The audience are not reading to approve or disapprove but need to be in a position to make sense of the story. The discussion of pitfalls is the single

01

Write first draft, check for spelling & grammar

02

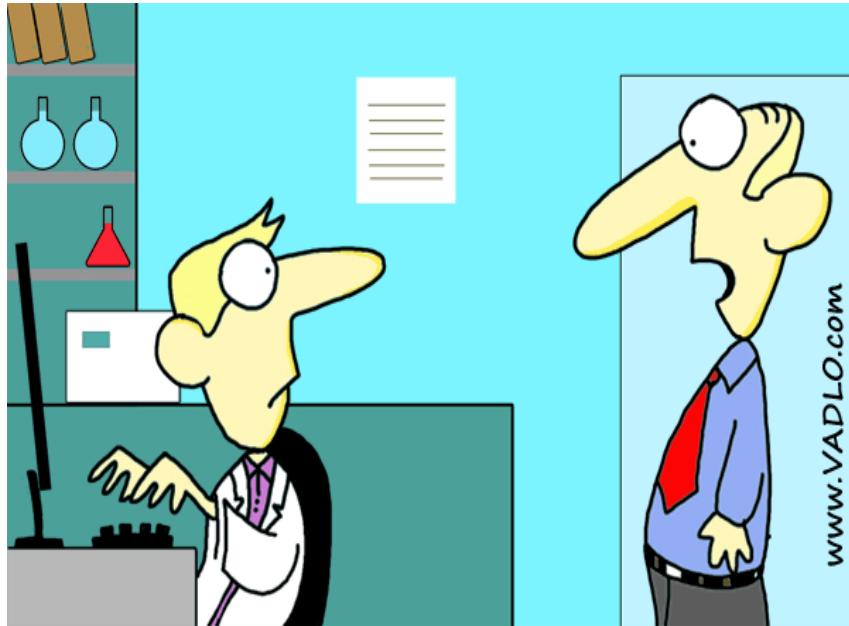
Allow co-authors & others to proof-read

03

Make final version for submission

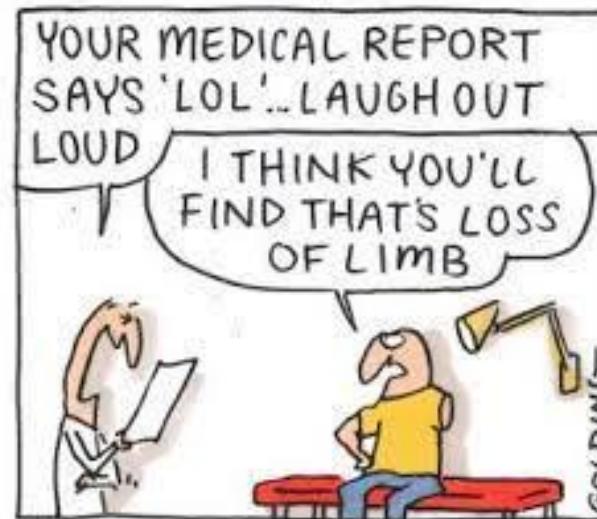


# Draft “Hints & Tips”



“You should spend the next week typing down names of all co-authors on your paper.”

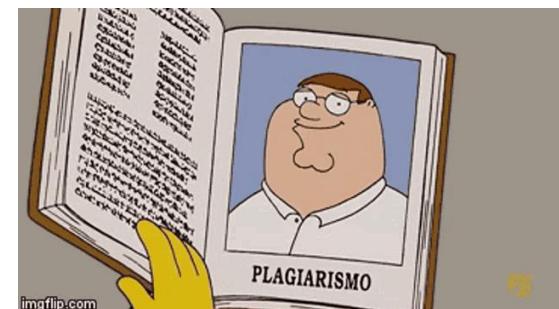
**Authorship:** only those who contributed to writing; main authors & consultants- discuss authorship early on.



**Abbreviations:** Define first



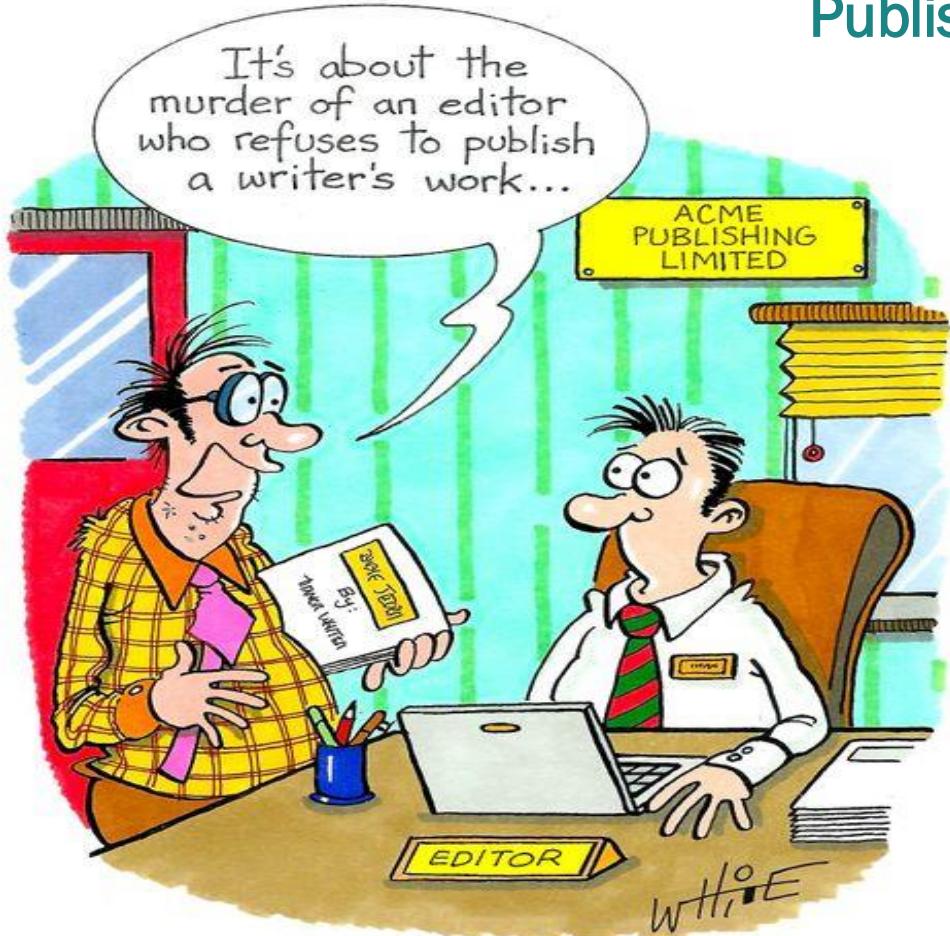
**References:** ~12; style



**Check for  
Plagiarism**



# Publishing in Leading Medical Journals?



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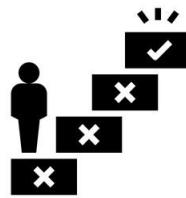


- Prefer prospective & methodologically-sound studies
- Majority accepts high-quality case reports



# If, at First, You Don't Succeed...

- Try, try again!



- With sufficient persistence, you can publish!



@sylviaduckworth



## Case Report Journals

- Numerous respected, peer-reviewed medical journals specialize in case reports; many are open access
- Example: *Journal of Medical Case Reports*, *American Journal of Case Reports*, *Oxford Medical Case Reports*, *BMJ*, *American Journal of Medicine*, *Journal of Internal Medicine*, *Journal of Hospital Medicine*, and *International Journal of -- Case Reports; Case Reports in...* (list medical librarian)



Check their complete list:  
<https://static1.square-space.com/static/5d9a8d505d066103652cfefb/t/60358658d5c5456125260e53/1614120536974/Journals+that+Accept+Case+Reports.pdf>

Great website with resources



**SWIHM**  
Scientific Writing In Health & Medicine

## Journals that explicitly accept case reports

Note: indexing is listed in the following alphabetical order – MEDLINE, PMC, Scopus (only the first applicable index in this order is listed; the journal may be indexed in other databases as well).

Journal Title	Publisher	Society or Sponsoring Organization	Indexing (NLM, Scopus)	Impact Factor
<i>A&amp;A Case Reports</i>	Wolters Kluwer	International Anesthesia and Analgesia Research Society	Scopus	
<i>AACE Clinical Case Reports</i>	American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists	American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists	PMC	
<i>ACG Case Reports Journal</i>	Wolters Kluwer	American College of Gastroenterology	PMC	
<i>Acta Radiologica Open</i>	SAGE		PMC	
<i>AHRQ Web Morbidity and Mortality</i>	Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality	US Federal Healthcare Agency	MEDLINE	
<i>AJP Reports</i>	Thieme		PMC	
<i>AJSP Reviews &amp; Reports</i>	Wolters Kluwer			
<i>Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine</i>	InnoVision Health Media		MEDLINE	✓
<i>American Journal of Case Reports</i>	International Scientific Information		MEDLINE	
<i>American Journal of Ophthalmology Case Reports</i>	Elsevier		PMC	
<i>Anais Brasileiros de Dermatologia</i>	Sociedade Brasileira de Dermatologia		MEDLINE	✓
<i>APSP Journal of Case Reports</i>	Association of Paediatric Surgeons of Pakistan	Association of Paediatric Surgeons of Pakistan		
<i>Autopsy and Case Reports</i>	Hospital Universitário of the University of São Paulo		PMC	
<i>BJR Case Reports</i>	British Institute of Radiology		PMC	
<i>BMJ Case Reports</i>	BMJ Publishing Group		MEDLINE	
<i>Case Reports in Anesthesiology</i>	Hindawi		PMC	
<i>Case Reports in Cardiology</i>	Hindawi		PMC	
<i>Case Reports in Clinical Medicine</i>	Scientific Research Publishing			
<i>Case Reports in Critical Care</i>	Hindawi		PMC	
<i>Case Reports in Dermatological Medicine</i>	Hindawi		PMC	
<i>Case Reports in Dermatology</i>	Karger		PMC	
<i>Case Reports in Emergency Medicine</i>	Hindawi		PMC	
<i>Case Reports in Endocrinology</i>	Hindawi		PMC	
<i>Case Reports in Gastroenterology</i>	Karger		PMC	





## Reference



Supplemental electronic content to  
J Med Libr Assoc. Apr;104(2):DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3163/1536-5050.104.2.010>  
[www.mlanet.org](http://www.mlanet.org)  
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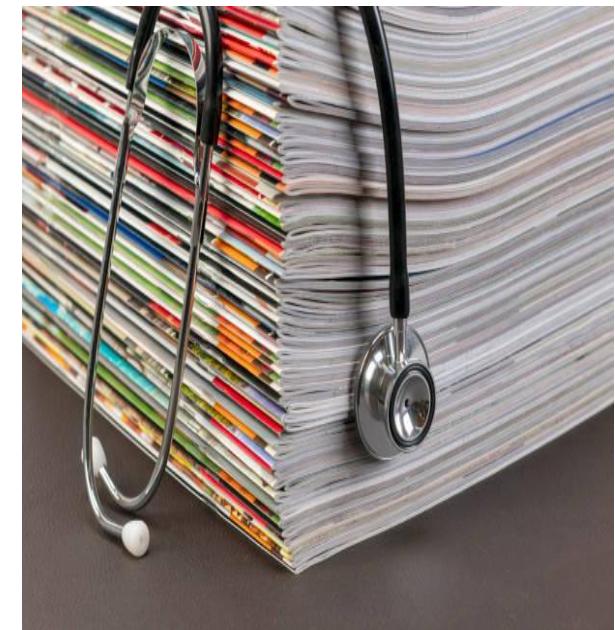
### New journals for publishing medical case reports

Katherine G. Akers, PhD

**Table 1**  
Case report journals

Journal title	Publisher/Society	Year launched	Open access	Questionable publishing practices	PubMed indexed
<a href="#"><u>A&amp;A Case Reports</u></a>	Wolters Kluwer Health/International Anesthesia Research Society	2013	No	No	No
<a href="#"><u>AACE Clinical Case Reports</u></a>	American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists	2015	Yes	No	No
<a href="#"><u>ACG Case Reports Journal</u></a>	American College of Gastroenterology	2013	Yes	No	Yes
<a href="#"><u>AJP Reports</u></a>	Thieme Medical Publishers	2011	Yes	No	No
<a href="#"><u>American Journal of Cancer Case Reports</u></a>	Ivy Union Publishing	2013	Yes	Yes	No
<a href="#"><u>American Journal of Case Reports</u></a>	International Scientific Information Science and Education Publishing	2001	Yes	No	Yes
<a href="#"><u>American Journal of Medical Case Reports</u></a>	International Scientific Information Science and Education Publishing	2013	Yes	Yes	No
<a href="#"><u>Aperito Journal of Case Reports: Clinical</u></a>	Aperito Online Publishing	2015	Yes	Yes	No
<a href="#"><u>APSP Journal of Case Reports</u></a>	EL-MED-Pub Publishers/Association of Paediatric Surgeons of Pakistan	2010	Yes	No	Yes
<a href="#"><u>Austin Cardio &amp; Cardiovascular Case Reports</u></a>	Austin Publishing Group	2015	Yes	Yes	No
<a href="#"><u>Austin Gynecology Case Reports</u></a>	Austin Publishing Group	2015	Yes	Yes	No
<a href="#"><u>Austin Journal of Clinical Case Reports</u></a>	Austin Publishing Group	2014	Yes	Yes	No
<a href="#"><u>Austin Oncology Case Reports</u></a>	Austin Publishing Group	2015	Yes	Yes	No
<a href="#"><u>Autopsy and Case Reports</u></a>	Hospital Universitario of the University of San Paulo	2011	Yes	No	No
<a href="#"><u>BJR Case Reports</u></a>	British Institute of Radiology	2015	Yes	No	No
<a href="#"><u>BMJ Case Reports</u></a>	BMJ Publishing Group	2008	No	No	Yes
<a href="#"><u>Case Reports in Anesthesiology</u></a>	Hindawi Publishing	2011	Yes	No	Yes
<a href="#"><u>Case Reports in Cardiology</u></a>	Hindawi Publishing	2011	Yes	No	Yes
<a href="#"><u>Case Reports in Clinical Medicine</u></a>	Scientific Research Publishing	2012	Yes	Yes	No
<a href="#"><u>Case Reports in Clinical Pathology</u></a>	Sciedu Press	2014	Yes	Yes	No

Great list for all Journals  
accepting case reports



# OPEN ACCESS

## GOLD ROUTE



## GREEN ROUTE



## HYBRID ROUTE



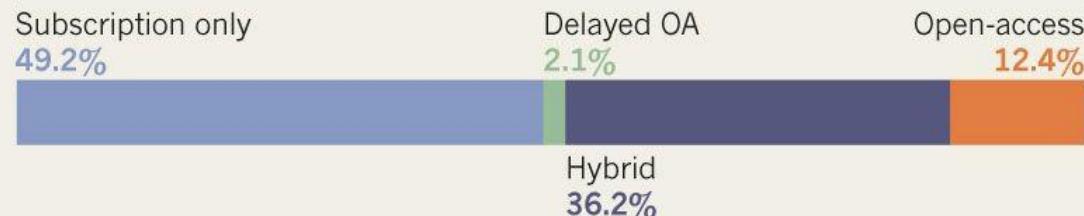
# Impact Factor of Medical Journals

Name of the journal	Impact factor
New England Journal of Medicine	72.40
The Lancet	47.83
Journal American Medical Association	44.40
Nature	40.13
British Medical Journal	20.78
Annals of Internal Medicine	17.13
British Journal of Anaesthesia	6.23
American Journal of Transplantation	6.16
British Journal of Surgery	5.89
American Journal of Surgery	2.61
Journal of Nepal Medical Association	0.04
Journal of Nepal Health Research Council	Not available
Kathmandu university Medical Journal	Not available
Nepal Medical College Journal	Not available

## PUBLISHING MODELS

Worldwide, the proportion of subscription-only journals\* shrank between 2012 and 2016, giving way to more open-access (OA) and hybrid journals.

### Proportion of journals published 2012



### Proportion of journals published 2016



\*From Scopus database. Hybrid journals are subscription titles that allow authors to make individual papers open for a fee.

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# Be Careful of Predatory Journals!



To check,  
go here

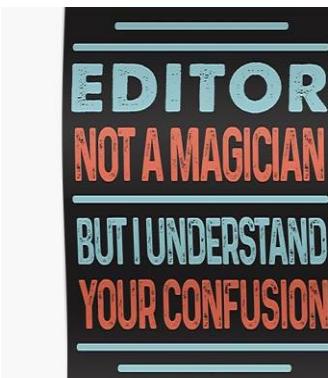


<https://journalsearches.com/predatory-journals.php>



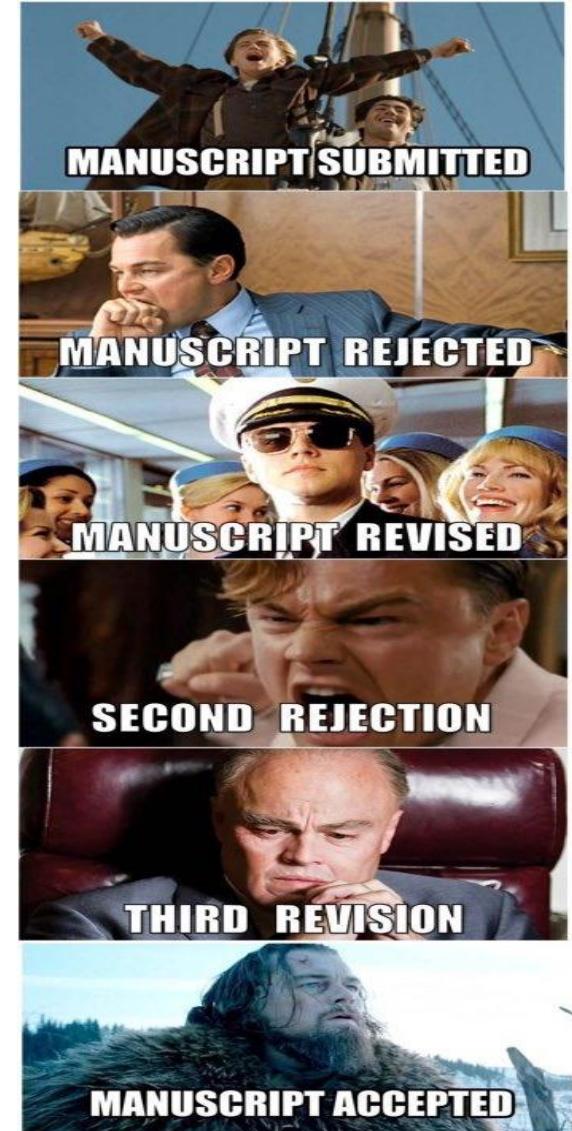
# F/U After Manuscript Submission

- Most editors will acknowledge receipt of a manuscript, will assign a #
- Remember: you cannot submit to a 2<sup>nd</sup> Journal while awaiting a decision from the 1<sup>st</sup> Journal
- Typically, most journals tell you of decision within 6 weeks
- If not contacted in 3 months, contact journal directly
- Most CR will require 1-2 revisions after submission



## Resubmission After Rejection

- Read reviewer's comments carefully (mostly experts in the field)
- Revise manuscript to incorporate reviewer's comments
- Most Case Reports will get accepted within 3-4 submission attempts
- Apply to lesser well-known journals



# Recap- 13 Steps to Publishing a Case Report

A patient with an interesting condition  
Consult faculty

Why is this case important? Identify a "take-home message"

Choose a journal

Obtain the journal's "Authors guidelines" or Instructions for Authors

Enlist a medical student, resident, or colleague to divide the workload

Perform a literature search

Compile all articles in a file & assign them numbers or save them on EndNote

Write up the case and discussion (put references in order)

When finalizing the article, renumber sources in correct order

Submit your manuscript to the journal with cover letter

If article gets rejected, obtain reviewers' comments

Revise using reviewers' comments & guidelines for authors of ANOTHER journal

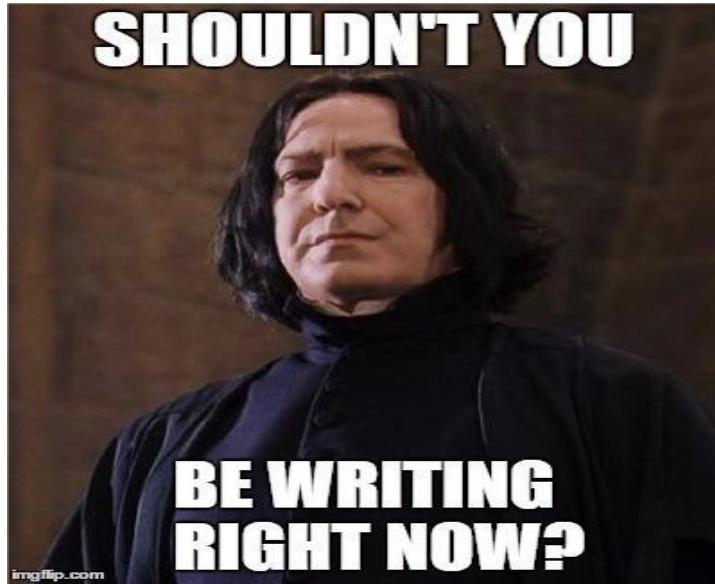
Submit article to the second journal- keep your fingers crossed!



## More References

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THANK YOU!



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