

Case Reports: An Art Sailing into the Unknown

Dr. Kalpit Goriwal¹, Dr. Adheesh Goriwal²

M.S. Office

Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals Sarita Vihar New Delhi 110076 India

Corresponding Author: Dr. Kalpit Goriwal

Abstract: Case report is defined as a description of a single case of a particular disease. With each passing milestone in the the time line of medical publication era, case reports are losing their ground. Coveted journals are straightaway ignoring this very aspect of medical literature. We hereby try to emphasize on the very importance of case report publications and on why this aspect of medical literature needs a little bit more heed to its credit.

Key Words: CARE guidelines, Case reports, Impact factor, Journals

Date of Submission: 02-04-2018

Date of acceptance: 17-04-2018

I. Introduction

Case report is defined as a description of a single case of a particular disease. It has particular importance in the reporting of rare disease entities. A good case report will explore all the aspects of the disease in question and try to explore newer dimensions for a better understanding. A well structured case report will have a review of literature which will summarise almost all the work done by our forefathers in the particular dimension. Time to time reviews of the historical aspects will update our knowledge and will ping us regarding possible shifts in paradigms related to the entity. Comparatively being a faster mode of medical reporting system, it tends to strike our neurons more often ; hence keeping us in touch with a particular disease entity.

To homogenise the format of presentation for a uniform understanding round the globe, certain guidelines have been put forward. The CARE (i.e. CAsE REport) guidelines include a reporting checklist that is listed on the EQUATOR Network, an international initiative aimed at promoting transparent and accurate reporting of health research studies. This 13-item checklist includes the title, key words, abstract, introduction, patient information, clinical findings, timeline, diagnostic assessment, therapeutic interventions, follow-up and outcomes, discussion, patient perspective, and informed consent.

II. Discussion

When we look at the basic structured approach of a case report, we see a unique case of a particular disease which draws attention immediately. What we feel from our experiences is that case reports are attention pullers, especially for medical students and it updates them regarding diseases or conditions with the “rare” tag. It alerts clinicians around the world about that unique aspect of the disease and decreases the chances of ignoring the same if ever encountered. We want to emphasize here that case reports serve as a primer to the chain reaction of other higher volume studies namely, case series, clinical trials, etc. A disease entity may be first encountered as a case report and that seed may develop into a tree with various aspects representing different branches of this tree. There are numerous illustrations where case reports led to iconic developments based of these case reports. To list a few -

- 1) Sigmund Freud reported on numerous cases, including Rat Man, and Wolf Man
- 2) Frederick Treves reported on "The Elephant Man", which only in 1986 was it conjectured that he had Proteus syndrome, a very rare congenital disorder also known as Wiedemann syndrome.
- 3) Paul Broca reported on language impairment following left hemisphere lesions in the 1860s
- 4) William MacIntyre reported on a case of multiple myeloma (described in the 1840s)
- 5) Christiaan Barnard described the world's first heart transplant as a case report
- 6) W. G. McBride, Thalidomide Case Report (1961). *The Lancet* 2:1358; which on further investigation led to the causal relationship between thalidomide and meromelia, phocomelia.

III. Conclusion

Having a panoramic view of “Case Report Studies” we can comfortably conclude that they deserve a better place in hierarchy of medical literature publications. Although simple and hassle free to report, they hold an immense potential of uncovering something big. They may be equated to the “*nidus of the big bang*”. The soul

reason time tested and reputed journals avoid incorporating case reports in their prime publications is the negative impact they have on the impact factor of these journals since case reports are not cited much. We feel its high time that we start to give this art the heed it deserves otherwise down the time lane it may become “The Dodo Of Medical Literature Publication”.

References

- [1]. Debra Volkland; Robert L. Iles (1997). *Guidebook to better medical writing*. Washington, DC: Island Press. ISBN 0-9661831-0-X. OCLC 41579709.
- [2]. Aronson JK (June 2003). "Anecdotes as evidence". *BMJ*. **326** (7403): 1346. doi:10.1136/bmj.326.7403.1346. PMC 1126236 . PMID 12816800.
- [3]. Greenhalgh T (July 1997). "How to read a paper. Getting your bearings (deciding what the paper is about)". *BMJ*. **315** (7102): 243–6. doi:10.1136/bmj.315.7102.243. PMC 2127173 . PMID 9253275.
- [4]. Gagnier JJ, Kienle G, Altman DG, Moher D, Sox H, Riley D (2013). "The CARE guidelines: consensus-based clinical case reporting guideline development". *Headache*. **53** (10): 1541–7. doi:10.1111/head.12246. PMID 24266334.
- [5]. Aronson JK, Hauben M (December 2006). "Anecdotes that provide definitive evidence". *BMJ*. **333** (7581): 1267–9. doi:10.1136/bmj.39036.666389.94. PMC 1702478 . PMID 17170419.
- [6]. "Thalidomide and congenital abnormalities". James Lind Library. Retrieved 28 May 2014.
- [7]. Vandembroucke JP (February 2001). "In defense of case reports and case series". *Ann. Intern. Med.* **134** (4): 330–4. doi:10.7326/0003-4819-134-4-200102200-00017. PMID 11182844.
- [8]. Yitschaky O, Yitschaky M, Zadik Y (May 2011). "Case report on trial: Do you, Doctor, swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?" (PDF). *J Med Case Reports*. **5** (1): 179. doi:10.1186/1752-1947-5-179. PMC 3113995 . PMID 21569508.
- [9]. "The CARE Guidelines: Consensus-based Clinical Case Reporting Guideline Development". The EQUATOR Network. Retrieved 2014-05-28.
- [10]. "Cardiac transplantation: since the first case report". *Grand Rounds*. Archived from the original on 2010-10-23.

Dr. Kalpit Goriwal." Case Reports: An Art Sailing into the Unknown."IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences (IOSR-JDMS), vol. 17, no. 4 2018, pp 08-09.