

Writing a case study

Case studies are important to the understanding of rare diseases such as bleeding disorders. Here are a few general points to bear in mind before you start writing:

- ❖ Always assume your reader knows less than you do about your subject matter
- ❖ Report your experiences using the third person rather than “we”
- ❖ Write in the past tense, rather than the present tense
- ❖ If you use abbreviations in your article, make sure you define them fully on the first mention
- ❖ Use generic names for drugs (though you can add brand names in parentheses)
- ❖ You must confirm that the patient gave informed consent to their case being written up – the Editors may request to see a copy of the consent.

How to structure your article

The following guidance takes into account the CARE Case Report Guidelines (www.care-statement.org/). Authors are advised to consult the CARE Checklist of information to include when writing a case report.

TITLE

This should refer to the diagnosis or intervention that forms the focus of the case, followed by the words “case report”.

ABSTRACT

This is a short summary of the case, organised under four sub-headings:

- ❖ **Introduction:** One or two sentences to describe the context of the case, and to show what is ‘special’ or unique about it and what it adds to the scientific literature.
- ❖ **Case presentation:** A few sentences to describe the history, main symptoms, results of any examinations performed, and clinical findings. Try to give the working diagnosis and management.
- ❖ **Management and outcome:** Describe the course of the patient’s complaint, including diagnosis, therapeutic interventions, and outcomes. Refer where possible to any outcome measures used, to demonstrate how the patient’s condition evolved through the course of management.
- ❖ **Discussion:** Bring together the previous sections and explain both correlations and apparent inconsistencies. To conclude, within one or two sentences describe the lesson(s) learned and any key take-aways.

KEYWORDS

Up to six keywords identifying the diagnoses or interventions described in the case report, including the term “case report”.

MAIN BODY OF CASE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This should set the scene about the case, perhaps using a historical or social context.

- ❖ Explain the disorder and how it is usually managed
- ❖ Show the challenges your case presented to standard practice and/or what makes it unique
- ❖ Keep the introduction to just a few paragraphs in length.

CASE PRESENTATION

Introduce your patient by describing the primary symptoms and concerns that brought them to you.

- ❖ All patient-specific information should be anonymised/de-identified
- ❖ Summarise any medical, family and/or psychosocial history, including any relevant genetic information
- ❖ Include any relevant past interventions with outcomes
- ❖ Describe the results of any significant physical examinations but focus only on those that are relevant
- ❖ Describe the diagnostic assessment, including tests performed, any diagnostic challenges, and the diagnosis itself (including working diagnosis or other diagnoses considered, if appropriate).

There's no need to include every detail in the patient's clinical notes. You may use images/photographs where possible, provided there is nothing that can identify the patient and the patient has consented to their use.

MANAGEMENT AND OUTCOME

Describe the care that was planned, as well as the care that was actually provided, details of the time course, and the outcome. Try to be as specific as possible in describing the treatment given.

- ❖ Assume that the case study will be read by people who are less familiar with bleeding disorders than you are.
- ❖ Describe the type of therapeutic intervention and how it was administered, and any changes in the intervention (including the rationale)
- ❖ Include any follow-up diagnostic tests and other test results
- ❖ Include any validated tools you used to measure improvement, such as a joint health score or health-related quality of life score
- ❖ Describe any adverse or unanticipated events
- ❖ Try to give an indication of how and why treatment finished
- ❖ Where possible, and if appropriate, share the patient's perspective on the treatment they received, including their own reports of improvement or worsening symptoms
- ❖ Show how standard practice was changed to meet the challenges you mentioned in the introduction.

Consider presenting both the historical and current information from the episode of care you're describing as a timeline.

DISCUSSION

Identify any questions that the case raises. You don't need to give a complete physiological explanation for everything that was observed, or list all of the possible hypotheses that might explain the course of the patient's condition. You should include:

- ❖ Scientific discussion of the strengths and limitations associated with the case report
- ❖ Discussion of the relevant medical literature, with references
- ❖ A summary of key 'take-aways'/lessons learned from the case, including anything that, with hindsight, you might have done differently.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is usual to acknowledge anyone who helped with the preparation of the case study.

REFERENCES

These should be listed where you have used them to support the case study and numbered according to the order in which they first appear. Try to avoid using textbooks as references.

Submitting your case study

Manuscripts should be submitted to The Journal of Haemophilia Practice via the Managing Editor:
mike@haemnet.com.

In addition to the manuscript itself, your submission should include:

- ❖ A title page, including full title, author names and affiliations, and confirmation that informed consent has been obtained from the case study subject
- ❖ A covering letter, signed on behalf of all co-authors by the corresponding author, stating that the manuscript is original, has not been published elsewhere, and is not under consideration by another journal
- ❖ An Open Access License agreement completed by the corresponding author (downloadable from the Supplementary Materials section of the [Journal's homepage](#)).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information for authors can be found on [The Journal of Haemophilia Practice homepage](#).