

Case Report, Is it of Value?

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Abstract

There is always an argument about the value of case report. In every scientific meeting you will meet someone who consider publishing a case report of no benefit. I published many case reports, and in May 2016 the third expert meeting on medical case reports will be held in New Orleans, USA. Such gathering can give an impression of the unlimited value of case reports.

Keywords: Case reports; Scientific meeting; Patient

Mini Review

There is always an argument about the value of case report. In every scientific meeting you will meet someone who consider publishing a case report of no benefit. I published many case reports, and in May 2016 the third expert meeting on medical case reports will be held in New Orleans, USA. Such gathering can give an impression of the unlimited value of case reports. In history of medicine a case report open a new gate to understand some aspect of a disease especially the rare one. There are a lot of examples of case reports throughout the history demonstrating the great value of recording rare cases. One of these important moments in history of medicine, when Sigmund Freud described Rat Man which was a nickname to describe a case of Obsessional Neurosis [1]. Another case for Freud, was Wolf Man to protect the identity of his patient, who had a dream of a tree full of white wolves. This dream would play a major role in Freud's theory of psychosexual development [2]. Another example was when Joseph Jules Determine reported on a case of pure alexia in 1892, which is also known as: "alexia without agraphia or pure word blindness [3]. After this report many studies were done to understand in depth different types of ataxia. In 1961 the famous event known as thalidomide tragedy, was recorded in medical history after the Australian obstetrician William McBride suspected a link between birth defects and the drug thalidomide, [4]. At that time the pharmaceutical company payed a lot of compensations to the affected families.

After thalidomide tragedy, the policy of pharmaceutical companies changed and any minor side effect of any drug should be mentioned as warning in the insert leaflet. Near the end of last century, Christian Barnard described the world's first heart transplant, and it was a new era to treat terminal hopeless cardiac cases [5], and nowadays cardiac transplant is one of everyday medical practice. The importance of recoding a rare case is not only a history but recently, when the first report about, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), came from Saudi Arabia in 2012, it was an announcement of a novel coronavirus (MERS-Co V). After publishing this report, the measures to control the disease was carried out and still going on [6]. Nowadays, there is an ongoing Zika virus outbreak which is an emerging virus in the Western hemisphere, and it was the case report which announced the current outbreak [7,8]. These are examples of case reports which reflect the importance of the case report as one of the oldest forms of medical reporting and which is generally considered a type of anecdotal evidence [9]. Recently, evidence based medicine and treatment is very important in everyday practice. We have to follow well planned different research methodology to get an evidence based knowledge, including cohort studies, case control studies and meta-analysis. These require well planned study design, sample size, clear objectives as well as all other sophisticated research tools and modalities. Given

their intrinsic methodological limitations, including lack of statistical sampling, case reports are placed at the foot of the hierarchy of clinical evidence, together with case series [10]. Nevertheless, case reports do have genuinely useful roles in medical research and evidence-based medicine [11]. In spite of a lot of arguments, case report will be one of the most important sources for knowledge and education. Each of us can add to the pool of scientific literature with the publication of one case. By publishing case reports, we can let others know what we know [12]. The case report will often lead to further research, or may change the standard of care [13].

We have to remember that, medicine is a growing science and in science every new knowledge and experiences are accepted until otherwise disproved. Also, doctors during their daily practice are good clinicians and can help and treat well their patients. On the other hand they are, as well as, good researchers. Everyone should record his observation and review the literature to understand how to manage his patient well and if any observation not previously recorded in literature "or recorded as rare event" was noticed, he may write A Case Report. On the other hand, doctors can carry out researches according to the standards of the evidence based medicine and following the standard of all types of research methodologies. But the question is, when can we consider a case is suitable to be published as a case report?

According to Iles [12], most case reports are on one of five topics:

- 1-An unexpected association between diseases or symptoms.
- 2-An unexpected event in the course of observing or treating a patient.
- 3-Findings that shed new light on the possible pathogenesis of a disease or an adverse effect.
- 4-Unique or rare features of a disease.
- 5-Unique therapeutic approaches.

Finally, don't forget 'with patients we learn, with cases we share'

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