

WD07

GETTING YOUR VIGNETTE PUBLISHED IN JGIM AND OTHER JOURNALS: A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

Coordinator: Michael Landry, MD, MS (mlandry@tulane.edu)
Division of General Internal Medicine, Tulane University.



Additional Faculty:

Carlos Estrada, MD, MS, Lisa Willett, MD, Analia Castiglioni, MD, Gustavo Heudebert, MD. The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Geraldine Menard, MD. Tulane University School of Medicine

Bruce E. Johnson, MD. Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University.

Summary:

Clinical vignettes highlight important aspects of teaching, patient care, and research opportunities. Publication of clinical cases is one measure of scholarly activity. During the manuscript preparation, one can develop and practice skills such as conceptualization of an idea, communication, synthesis of information, and scientific writing. This interactive workshop will provide a hands-on experience during the small group exercise. Outcomes of the workshop are to identify essential elements of clinical vignettes, overcome common obstacles, and assist attendees in preparing an outline of their first draft for publication. Participants will be provided with resource materials and a list of relevant journals accepting case reports. JGIM Editors' Pearls will be highlighted to help improve the likelihood of a successful manuscript submission. JGIM Clinical Vignette Deputy Editors will actively participate in small group sessions and guide the discussion.

Learning Objectives:

1. List essential elements of a Case Report or Clinical Vignette manuscript
2. List strategies and practical suggestions for preparing such manuscripts to enhance the likelihood for publication
3. Identify resources to assist in the writing process
4. Identify barriers for publication

Agenda:

1. Introduction, goals, and objectives (5 min)
2. Presentation (15 min): Overview of the writing process, resources, vignette manuscript requirements, and target journals. A concise presentation on these topics will illustrate key points
3. Small group exercise (40 minutes): Each small group will use abstracts of submitted clinical vignettes from enrolled participants or the JGIM Meeting Supplement. Attendees will work with a few clinical vignette submissions, will prepare an outline, and will provide suggestions on the case.
4. Discussion and summary (20 min): Small groups will present their outline and will obtain feedback from the faculty presenters and the audience. The presentations will be limited.
5. Conclusions (5 min)
6. Evaluation of workshop (5 min)

Evaluation:

1. Do participants recognize the key essential elements of case reports and clinical vignettes?
2. Do participants feel more comfortable with the task of initiating the writing process after small group work?
3. Are participants better able to identify resources that improve the likelihood of successful manuscript submissions?
4. Are participants better able to develop strategies for overcoming barriers that might hinder the successful submission of manuscripts?

Get Organized

- Pull immediately (your case report)
 - Case history, labs, X-rays, pathology, etc.
 - Abstract submitted
 - Presentations made (slides, posters)
 - Any notes you may have (from discussions, feedback during presentations, etc.)
 - References
- Do another literature search
 - Include target journals
- Your target journal(s), pull
 - Find 3-4 “suitable” journals
 - ◆ Know your audience
 - ◆ Field: General vs. specialty
 - ◆ Impact factor (more “prestigious” journal have higher #, NEJM=44, SMJ=0.8)
 - ◆ Likelihood for publication
 - Browse examples
 - Call journal Editor
 - Review “sample” of published studies
 - Review Instructions for Authors (or Uniform Requirements, see in resources), pay attention to Authorship requirements/forms

Journals Publishing Case Reports/ Clinical Vignettes

General Internal Medicine (Impact Factor)

- NEJM (44): <http://www.nejm.org>
 - “Images in Clinical Medicine”
 - Letters
- Lancet (23.4): <http://www.thelancet.com/>
 - “Short Communication”
- Annals of Internal Medicine (13.2): <http://www.annals.org/>
 - Letters
- Archives Internal Medicine (8.0): <http://archinte.ama-assn.org/>
 - “Clinical Observations”: case series
 - Sample: <http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/164/21/2383>
- BMJ (9.0)
 - “Clinical Review”: few case reports
 - Sample:
http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/extract/330/7482/83?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=%22case+report%22&searchid=1106147536617_12152&stored_search=&FIRSTINDEX=0&volume=330&issue=7482
- American Journal of Medicine (4.4): <http://www.amjmed.org/>
 - Letters
- Journal of Internal Medicine (4.0):
 - <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0954-6820>
- Mayo Clinic Proceedings (3.9): <http://www.mayo.edu/proceedings/>
 - “Medical Images”
 - “Case Reports” sample: <http://www.mayoclinicproceedings.com/inside.asp?AID=652&UID>
- Canadian Medical Association Journal (7.4): <http://www.cmaj.ca/>
 - “Clinical Vistas”: Images
 - “Auscultations”: short case reports
 - “Case Reports” : short case reports
- JGIM (3.0). <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/submit.asp?ref=0884-8734>
- Am J Med Sci (1.4): <http://www.amjmedsci.com> (page charges apply)
- Southern Medical Journal (0.8): <http://www.smajournalonline.com/>
- Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine (0.7): <http://www.jrsm.org/>
- Patient Care (NA): <http://www.patientcareonline.com/patcare> (and get paid for it!!)
 - Sample: <http://www.patientcareonline.com/patcare/article/articleDetail.jsp?id=138230>
- European Journal of Internal Medicine (NA): <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/09536205>
 - “Brief Report”: case reports
- Postgraduate Medicine (0.7): <http://www.postgradmed.com/index.htm>
 - “Puzzles in practice”, “Pearls in Dermatology”: short case reports/ pictures/ few/ year
 - Sample: http://www.postgradmed.com/issues/2004/11_04/puzzles_question.htm
- Journal of Hospital Medicine (NA), <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/jabout/111081937/ForAuthors.html>
 - “Clinical Conundrum”
- Journal of Medical Case Reports (N/A) <http://jmedicalcasereports.com/info/instructions/>
- American Journal of Case Reports (Formerly known as “Case Reports and Clinical Practice Review”) (N/A) (Cost to publish) <http://www.amjcaserep.com/page.php?IDpage=210&p=4>
- Consultant Peer Reviewed Consultations in Primary Care (N/A) <http://www.consultantlive.com>

Check for a local state journal

Specialty Journals (based on your case)

Get Started

- Your first draft: Just Do It!!
 - Use your abstract, slides, or posters and copy into a word document
 - Background, Learning object, Case, Discussion, Take home points
 - Congratulations! First draft done!

Outline for Case Reports

- Title
 - Informative
 - Facilitate retrieval with electronic searching
- Introduction/ Background
 - Is case unique? Previously reported?
 - Does case describe 2 disorders/ previously unsuspected causal relationship?
 - Does case represent a new pattern?
 - Does case have an unusual diagnosis, prognosis, therapy or harm?
 - Describe how case contributes to scientific knowledge? Is it worth reading?
 - Describe teaching points that add value to this case. Learning points?
 - Other Case reports: Uncommon features, atypical/ unusual, new adverse events,...
- Methods and Results
 - Detailed description: history, exam, diagnostic studies, investigations.
 - Describe the treatments adequately. Have all available therapeutic options been considered? Are outcomes related to treatments?
- Discussion
 - Report a literature review of other similar cases. Describe how this case is different/ unique and adds to past published literature. Review of past published relevant cases.
 - Explain the rationale for reporting the case. What is unusual about the case? Does it challenge prevailing wisdom?
 - Possible alternative explanations. Is the cause of the patient's illness clear-cut?
 - Develop the learning points.
 - In the future, could things be done differently in a similar case? Implications for subsequent developments in clinical practice, teaching, or research.

Adapted from:

- **Huth, E. How to Write and Publish Papers in the Medical Sciences. 2nd Ed. Williams-Wilkins. 1990.**
- Sorinola O, Olufowobi O, Coomarasamy A, Khan KS. Instructions to authors for case reporting are limited: a review of a core journal list. BMC Med Educ. 2004 25;4(1):4.
 - http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?cmd=Retrieve&db=pubmed&dopt=Abstract&list_uids=15043755

Revise Your Manuscript

Revise your 1st to “n” draft (not ∞)

- Order to work on: Case, Introduction/Background, Learning objectives, Discussion, Take home points, Abstract, Title
 - Set a deadline for submission
 - Save each draft
 - Don't delete paragraphs (copy them at the end; you may need them later)
 - Find what suits you best
 - ◆ 30' – 60', daily
 - ◆ Blocks of time
 - ◆ Early vs. late
- Avoid writers' block:
 - ◆ Get ideas down; free-write
 - ◆ Brainstorm with co-authors
 - ◆ Draw pictures/ flowgrams
 - ◆ Type with screen off
 - ◆ Type and don't read
 - ◆ Don't revise while you type initial drafts
 - ◆ Avoid perfection (initially)
 - Revise for...
 - ◆ Essence, content
 - ◆ Order and flow
 - ◆ Consistency
 - ◆ Grammar, English
 - ◆ Manuscript requirements

Get Feedback

- Involve co-authors
- Authorship Guidelines: define up front
 - Order: first, last
 - Who should be in? out?
 - Huth, E. Guidelines on Authorship of Medical Papers. Ann Intern Med. 1986; 104:269-74. (Specific criteria)
 - Browner, Chapter 10.
 - International journals, Criteria: <http://www.icmje.org/#author>
- Be specific about what you need or formatted (Red pen? Revise electronic manuscript with/without “tracking” changes feature on MS Word? General vs. specific?)
- Be specific about timelines

JGIM “Editor’s Pearl’s” – Audience: Academic General Internists

- Good English is a must. Great cases poorly written make the editors work VERY difficult
- Make teaching points clear
- Avoid jargon
- Must have proof of diagnosis without a doubt
- Brainstorm/ Discuss with peers, authors, experts. Helps identify unique teaching points and determine if case worth publishing
- Type of cases
 - Great cases are VERY GOOD! (assists clinicians make a diagnosis – patient do well)
 - Interesting cases are OK (nice reminders for clinicians)
 - “The only case described of the most unusual manifestation of a rare disorder” (NO!)

General Resources, Case Reports

- Rahij Anwar, et al. **How to write a case report.** *BMJ Career Focus* 2003; 327: 153s -a-154s -a. [[Full text: http://careerfocus.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/327/7424/s153-a](http://careerfocus.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/327/7424/s153-a)] (nice overview)
- Wright SM, Kouroukis C: **Capturing zebras: what to do with a reportable case.** *CMAJ* 2000, **163**(4):429-431. [[Full Text: http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/163/4/429](http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/full/163/4/429)] (nice overview)
- Brodell RT: **Do more than discuss that unusual case: Write it up.** (nice overview) [[Full text: http://www.postgradmed.com/issues/2000/08_00/editorial.htm](http://www.postgradmed.com/issues/2000/08_00/editorial.htm)] *Postgrad Med* 2000., **108**(2):

Steps to publishing a case report

1. A patient with an interesting condition presents to your practice.
 2. Identify a "take-home" message or teaching point from the case. Why is this case important?
 3. Choose a journal appropriate for publishing the case report.
 4. Obtain the journal's "guidelines for authors."
 5. Enlist a medical student, resident, or colleague to help spread the work load.
 6. Perform a literature search of journals, textbooks, and electronic media.
 7. Compile all source articles in a file.
 8. Assign a reference number to each source in the order obtained and write this number in the right upper corner of each article's front page.
 9. Write up the case and discussion in the required format using assigned reference numbers to identify sources of information.
 10. When the article is finalized, renumber sources in order as they appear in the paper.
 11. Mail to the journal your manuscript with cover letter providing correspondence address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address.
 12. If the article is not accepted by the journal, obtain reviewers' comments.
 13. Revise paper using reviewers' comments and the guidelines for authors of another appropriate journal.
 14. Submit article to the second journal.
- Vandembroucke JP: **In defense of case reports and case series.** *Ann Int Med* 2001, **134**:330-332. [[Full Text: http://www.annals.org/cgi/reprint/134/4/330](http://www.annals.org/cgi/reprint/134/4/330)] (rationale for case reports)
 - Bignall J, Horton R: **Learning from stories – The Lancet's case reports.** *Lancet* 1995, **346**(8985):1246.
 - Huston P, Squires BP: **Case reports: Information for authors and peer reviewers.** *CMAJ* 1996, **154**:43-44.
 - Khan KS, Thompson PJ: **A proposal for writing and appraising case reports.** *BJOG* 2002, **109**(8):849.
 - Sorinola et al. **Instructions to authors for case reporting are limited: A review of a core journal list.** *BMC Medical Education* 2004, 4:4 <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6920/4/4>

General Resources, Others

- Huth, E. *How to Write and Publish Papers in the Medical Sciences.* 2nd Ed. Williams-Wilkins. 1990.
- BMJ short publications, tips for publishing:
 - What types of publications should you aim for? *BMJ* 2002;324:S133
<http://careerfocus.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/324/7344/S133>
 - How to target your paper at an appropriate journal, *BMJ* 2002;324:S165
<http://careerfocus.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/324/7348/S165>
 - How to maximise your chances to publish as a trainee. *BMJ* 2002;324:S84
<http://careerfocus.bmjournals.com/cgi/content/full/324/7338/S84>
- International Units, SI, National Physical Laboratory, <http://www.npl.co.uk/npl/reference/index.html>
- Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: <http://www.icmje.org>
- Journal Impact Factor, need to access "ISI Journal Citation Reports" through "Web of Science". Requires personal or institutional subscription, ex: <http://isi01.isiknowledge.com/portal.cgi?DestApp=JCR&Func=Frame>
- Organising a research project from scratch. Feldman M, Casey K. *BMJ Career Focus* 2002; 325: S97a. [[Full text](#)]

General Suggestions for Research Papers

How to Write/Publish Papers – Medical Sciences

1. Message: important question clearly answered. Is it worth writing? So what?
Format: shortest
Audience: who cares? Journal
2. Preparing
 - Authorship
 - Journal requirements
 - Data
 - Typing (use coded references)
3. Argument:
 - Introduction: why research was started: gap of knowledge justifying research (weaknesses that deserve another study)
 - Objective: statement of the problem
 - Materials and methods: evidence
 - Results: validity/credibility, old to new
 - Discussion: possible implication of evidence not wholly rejected
 - Opening: answer to research question
 - Supporting evidence
 - Counter evidence
 - Generalizability
 - Limitations
 - Conclusion
4. Draft
 - Title: condensed version of the full text: informative/indicative
 - Outline: major points/topics for each section (may use the abstract)
 - Write from outline
 - Each draft a separate file
5. Content and structure: say no more, say all you should, sequence clear
 - Title: accurate, succinct, and effective
 - Abstract: represents the major points
 - Introduction: set the stage, question and Ho clear
 - Main: sequence, anything to D/C?, anything to add?, data agrees with tables, any references needed or D/C?, D/C tables?
6. Prose structure and style:
 - Fluency: write at the side a note of the point
 - Clarity, economy, accuracy, grace
 - Paragraph length (25-26), connections, structure: internal sequence going to a point
 - Sentence: length (< 20 words, verb early on)
 - Elements of sentences: clarity <2 modifiers, avoid modified phrases, misplaced modifiers, ambiguous antecedents (referring to whom)
 - Accuracy: using right definition or words
 - Spelling
 - Economy
 - Avoid weak verbs, connections: to be, to have, there is
 - Replace abstract nouns: “-ion” write “-ing” instead (the classification, classifying), delete empty phrases or words (pg 129), dehumanizing words, pomposity
 - Check all “-ion”, very, of
7. Tables/graphs: < 1 table/1000 words

Adapted from Huth, E. How to Write and Publish Papers in the Medical Sciences. 2nd Ed. Williams-Wilkins. 1990.

Case Report Outline (Overhead)

Title:

Authors:

**Introduction /
Background**

- Unique?
- Unsuspected?
- Uncommon?
- Unusual? New Pattern?
- Contribute, worth reading, teaching points
- What would be the challenge of presenting?
- Most marketable?
- How will you develop the discussion?

**Methods / Results
(Case Description)**

- History
- Exam
- Investigations
- Treatments
- Diagnosis must be proven without doubt

Discussion

- Literature review
- Unique?
- Rationale for reporting
- Future: do differently?
- Learning Points
- Implications: Teaching, Practice, Research

After Discussion

- Is it worth publishing?
- Tentative Journals:
- If no, what new twist/message to emphasize?

BEFORE

COMPLETE THIS PAGE PRIOR TO THE WORKSHOP

We are interested in your experience and opinion regarding Case Report / Vignette. We would appreciate if you could answer the following questions. This survey was created to assess the effectiveness of this workshop.

I am a: Student (1) Resident (2) Fellow (3) CMR (4) Faculty (5) Other (6)

**Regarding Case Vignettes or Case Reports at regional or national meetings, HAVE YOU EVER:
If yes, how many:**

- 1) Submitted any for presentation? No (0) Yes (1) 1-5 (1) >5 (2)
- 2) Presented any at any meeting? No (0) Yes (1) 1-5 (1) >5 (2)

Regarding publication of Case Vignettes or Case Reports in medical journals, HAVE YOU EVER:

(Consider any type, such as manuscripts, brief reports, letters to the Editor, observations, medical images, etc. Do not include abstracts published at meetings)

- 1) Submitted any for publication? No (0) Yes (1) 1-5 (1) >5 (2)
- 2) Published one or had one accepted? No (0) Yes (1) 1-5 (1) >5 (2)

In the next 6-12 months, How likely are you to submit or HELP submit a Case Vignette / Case Report for...

presentation at a meeting?	Very Unlikely 1	Unlikely 2	Neutral 3	Likely 4	Very Likely 5
publication in a medical journal?	Very Unlikely 1	Unlikely 2	Neutral 3	Likely 4	Very Likely 5

Please rate your level COMPETENCE for How to write a Case Vignette / Case Report:

Competence level	Low 1	2	Med 3	4	High 5
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Do you agree that Case Vignette / Case Report helps your professional career when...

presented at a meeting?	Disagree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Agree 5
published in a medical journal?	Disagree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Agree 5

AFTER
COMPLETE THIS PAGE AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP

In the next 6-12 months, How likely are you to submit or HELP submit a Case Vignette / Case Report for...

presentation at a meeting?	Very Unlikely 1	Unlikely 2	Neutral 3	Likely 4	Very Likely 5
publication in a medical journal?	Very Unlikely 1	Unlikely 2	Neutral 3	Likely 4	Very Likely 5

Please rate your level COMPETENCE for How to write a Case Vignette / Case Report:

Competence level	Low 1	2	Med 3	4	High 5
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During the workshop I LEARNED:

Learned	Little 1	2	Some 3	4	Much 5
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Do you agree that Case Vignette / Case Report helps your professional career when...

presented at a meeting?	Disagree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Agree 5
published in a medical journal?	Disagree 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Agree 5

In the next 6-12m, we would like to contact you and ask if you have submitted / presented a Case Vignette / Case Report I prefer NOT to be contacted ⁽⁰⁾

Name: _____ **e-mail:** _____ **State:** _____ **Date:** _____

Which description best characterizes your current professional affiliation?

- Community-based ⁽¹⁾ University-based ⁽²⁾ Government / Public Health ⁽³⁾ Military ⁽⁴⁾ Other ⁽⁵⁾

THANKS !!

Please return to Presenters or:

Carlos Alberto Estrada, M.D., M.S. University of Alabama at Birmingham, Division of General Internal Medicine
 732 Faculty Office Tower - 510 20th Street South. Birmingham, AL 35294-3407 -- Fax: (205) 975-7797 cestrada@uab.edu