

The Power of Case Reports

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Medical education has currently a variety of tools as never before in the history of mankind. Options include everything from telepresence to virtual reality. However, interaction with patients remains, as in the past, an unsurpassed source of learning. Health-care practice provides learning about the way different pathologies manifest, their clinical course, and the response to different treatments.

A simple way to share that experience is through case reporting. A case report consists of a detailed description of significant clinical information of a case or a small group of patients, presenting pathologies not previously described, new therapeutic methodologies, or cases with an unusual response to treatment.

This type of study has often been underestimated because it is a category of publication with a low level of evidence [1-4] and does not have a high citation rate [1, 2, 4, 5]. These causes have led to case reports being a small segment of health publications [4].

However, these studies can provide important information [1-9]. Case reports can be the basis of future large-scale clinical studies [6], can reveal facts that often go unnoticed in large series of patients [3], and be the starting point for the development of new treatments [3]. They can demonstrate results in one or a few cases of therapeutic methods previously tested in animal experiments [4].

Case reports have made it possible to detect severe adverse effects [3, 4]. Nayak described that the teratogenic effect of thalidomide was identified through a case report of phocomelia [3].

We must also be aware that the publication of a case report is often the first step of a young colleague in the world of publications. That is why it should be encouraged. The publication of case reports allows even those who have less economic or institutional support for their academic activity to transmit their experience. It is a way to democratize scientific exchange and not depend only on supposed elites that end up

transforming clinical research production groups into small aristocracies that generate only a one-way exchange.

Writing a case report has been described not only as an academic procedure but also as an art [8].

There is useful information in the literature about how to write this type of manuscripts [3, 4, 6, 8, 10]. Cases must be original and transmit information that has an impact on clinical practice. They must be structured like the rest of the publications, provide a complete and correct description of the case, and have solid bibliographic support.

Starting in this volume we will include case reports. On this occasion, they come from different colleagues from Ibero America. We also incorporated a new section that consists of critical reading of scientific publications related to regenerative medicine. Contributions, proposals, and criticisms will be welcome.

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