

# Medical Case Reports: Title and Abstract Guidelines

The following guidelines and samples will help you compose a title and abstract for your submitted medical case report.

## Formatting for Your Target Journal

The information in this guide is generally applicable to case reports intended for submission to most medical journals. However, each journal has its own guidelines for content and formatting provided in the journal's "Instructions for authors", "Author guidelines" or "Preparing your manuscript" section. Read various medical case reports to gain a sense of the different formatting styles used by specific journals.

## Case Report Journals

Some medical journals publish a limited number of case reports. There are also numerous respected, peer-reviewed medical journals that specialize in case reports; many are open access publications. A few examples are [Journal of Medical Case Reports](#), [Oxford Medical Case Reports](#), [BJR Case Reports](#), and [International Journal of Surgery Case Reports](#).

## Case Report Title

As the first element of a case report that readers will see, the title should be *informative*, *highly relevant* to the subject, and *concise*. It should attract the attention of researchers and other readers of a journal while remaining authentic and convincing.

## Useful Terms to Include in the Title:

- Case-related Terms: *presentation, unusual case, rare case, challenges, complications, symptoms, causes, diagnosis, treatment*
  - Patient-related Terms: *patient, adult, child, infant, adolescent, elderly, man/woman*
- Article-related terms such as *case study* and *case report* are generally considered redundant and may detract from the interest of your title, so use them sparingly.

## Case Report Abstract

The abstract must be concise, complete, and comprehensible to readers before they have read the article.

## Structure of the Abstract

1. Background (1-2 sentences)—First, explain why this case is being reported and its novelty or clinical relevance.

Background Information to Include	Examples in text
Condition/procedure/ treatment discussed	"Inferior glenohumeral joint dislocations are rare. Due to severe swelling and overlapping of bones on an x-ray of the wrist and hand, dislocations are missed."
Explanation of the importance of this case	"The objective of this clinical case report is to highlight this unusual injury to avoid incorrect diagnosis."

2. Case presentation (3-6 sentences)—give a brief description of the patient’s medical and demographic details, their diagnosis, and interventions or complications, and the outcomes. Level of detail should be determined by importance to the novelty and outcomes of the case.

Case Information to Include	Examples in text
<b>Patient demographics (age, gender, nationality, etc.)</b>	“A 35-year-old man”; “a 1-month-old infant”; “a 12-year-old Somali girl,” etc.
<b>Presenting symptoms</b>	“Demonstrated typical signs and symptoms of Huntington’s Disease”; “presented to the hospital with severe chest pain”; “experienced a burning sensation due to swollen leg muscles”
<b>History of problems/symptoms</b>	“Reported a long history of asthma”; “had a family history of colon cancer on the maternal side”; “reported that inflammation had begun one year prior”
<b>Diagnoses</b>	“Based on the characteristic appearance of the cutaneous lesions, a diagnosis of granuloma annulare was made”; “a clinical diagnosis of chronic respiratory disease was made”; “intestinal lesions were consistent with severe Crohn’s Disease”
<b>Treatment</b>	“The patient was immediately intubated and antitubercular therapy was initiated”; “treatment was initiated with low-dose corticosteroids, anticoagulants, and vasodilators”
<b>Procedures</b>	“Following kidney biopsy, renal cysts were excised laparoscopically”; “the patient underwent three skin grafts”; “an emergency arteriogram showed smooth segmental narrowing and bilateral vasospasm”
<b>Complications/challenges</b>	“Additional history revealed that he had been ingesting ergotamine preparations for a number of years to relieve chronic muscle pain”; “laparoscopic access to the duodenum was inhibited by intra-abdominal fat”
<b>Outcomes</b>	“patient was asymptomatic on subsequent visits,” “although scapular swelling subsided, she continued to report severe back pain for the following month,” “...resulting in significant improvement within 4 hours and resolution of symptoms within 48 hours”

3. Discussion/Conclusion (1-2 sentences)—Briefly summarize the **clinical impact** and/or **implications of this case** and provide **suggestions** for the clinical area. Emphasize aspects of the case that may have broader implications, suggest precautions that should be taken, or be interesting topics for future research.

Examples: “This case illustrates the potential for severe vascular ischemia and the importance of a thorough medical history”; “Recognition of this disease is critical for institution of appropriate therapy and prevention of cutaneous necrosis”; “This case demonstrates the need for further investigation of the potential for internal tissue trauma due to laparoscopic procedures.”

Information to Include	Examples in text
<b>Overall clinical implications and impact</b>	“Each of these tests has a high negative predictive value but a poor positive predictive value”; “Identifying and reporting anomalous enzymes is an important service the clinical lab technician can provide a clinician”
<b>Suggestions/Considerations</b>	“Even when strict protocol is followed, clinicians must remain alert to the potential for medical errors related to misinterpretation of laboratory test results based on similar samples”; “SRED should be considered a possible complication of sedative hypnotics”
<b>Implications of this specific case</b>	“An atypical isoenzyme test may result from a macroenzyme, the presence of which can complicate interpretation of the test result and may lead to further unnecessary procedures”; “Antiviral therapy may significantly reduce mortality for patients who have risk factors identified”

### Medical Case Report Abstract Templates Medical Case Report Abstract Templates

#### Example #1: A Case of Injury

We herein report a case of a [patient age and gender] with an unusual case of [injury]. The [injury] consisted of features typical of [common features of the injury/disease/disorder], with additional [additional features of case, if any], signifying a [diagnosis/complications]. Features of this case are discussed together with its implications, including [implications of case]. [Additional measures taken—treatment/surgery/etc.] was undertaken due to [reason for measures].

#### Example #2: A Case of Disease/Disorder

[Disease/disorder] is a rare condition characterized by [symptoms]. Its presentation is usually [sporadic/chronic/acute]. Usually seen in patients who are [typical demographics of patient], [disease] presentation in [this specific category of patient] is rare. Symptoms at presentation depend on [parts of body/patient’s environment]. Patients with [disease/disorder] may present with [additional major symptoms]. We herein report a rare presentation of [disease/disorder] in a [patient demographic—age/gender/race/etc.] who suffered from [corresponding symptoms or co-morbid diseases]. [Diagnostics/tests] revealed [results of tests/complication]. The patient underwent [surgery/treatment] and was given [drugs/intubation/etc.]. Recovery was [description of recovery]. In spite of a wide range of therapeutic options for the management of [disease/disorder] described in the literature, the efficacy of those available therapies is [unknown/not well established/open/etc.].

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