

Editorial

## Medical Case Reports: Its Value in Times of COVID Pandemic

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The practice of medicine is as old as the first recordings in human history. It starts with the primitive man fighting diseases with magic and stone. The concepts of medical diagnosis and treatment purportedly started in ancient Egypt and Greece. (1) Advancing to what we now have today, there has been an evolution in the science of diagnosing, treating, and preventing disease. Medicine as we all know is a complex science that is enveloped with interesting and fascinating features that need to be studied carefully to obtain enough proof of evidence to ensure the integrity and patient safety. Hence, the research arena is a valuable piece in medicine in providing answers to intellectual queries and hypothesis.

All sciences are deeply rooted in observations to generate a new hypothesis. Oftentimes there are scientific observations that are not adequately described in clinical trials such as adverse events; hence, case reports remain to be an important aspect of publication. Case reports also describe new therapies and establish the efficacy of drugs and treatment. Its value is especially useful in patients who have very rare diseases, in which conducting clinical trials may deem to be difficult to pursue. Case reports can likewise be of value in situations where clinical trials are not able to recruit adequate sample populations, thereby unable to reach statistical significance. Even though case reports are not at the top of the list in the hierarchy of evidence-based medicine, the observations described in case reports can generate sound and the educational hypothesis that can lead to physiological studies followed by clinical trials. Its influence on scientific

literature is related to the high readability and vivid accounts of events. (2)

At present time, the novel COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the global society with more than 22 million infections, over 700,000 deaths, and impacted the world-wide economy. The first case of COVID-19 was reported on December 2, 2019, and the World Health Organization declared it a pandemic on March 11, 2020. At the time of the pandemic declaration, there was a total of 791 articles published on PubMed related to the topic of COVID-19, (3) of which 85 (4) were case reports. This demonstrates the importance of the contribution that case reports made in the understanding and exploration of COVID-19 at the beginning of the pandemic. Published case reports at this time, discussed topics and findings ranging from CT imaging, comorbidities, the first pediatric case, asymptomatic carriers, and the clinical course of the infection. All of which were important information addressing concerns and questions the medical community had. Case reports during the COVID-19 pandemic not only describe the clinical course of a specific patient, but it also provides a platform for international communication within the medical and scientific community. It serves its purpose of providing the first line of evidence in healthcare. To date, a total of 41,795 articles are published on PubMed related to the topic of COVID-19, of which currently 2,889 are case reports. As scientific advancements are made related to COVID-19 treatment and acceleration in the development of COVID-19 vaccines, case reports will remain a valuable resource for information dissemination.

The value of case reports should not be underestimated. Published case report articles are a good resource for physicians to provide information that may potentially lead to new research and advancement in clinical practice. However, case reports must be clear, concise, coherent, and must be able to convey a crisp message to be of value in the scientific community.

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