



## Case Reports in Traditional and Integrative Medicine

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The case reports have a low ranking on the evidence hierarchy, but they have an important role in knowledge transmission. Treatment individualizing is a prominent key in case reports. In traditional Persian medicine (TPM), holistic approach and individualizing the treatment based on the *Mizaj* (temperament) are basic concepts, too. It is important that what case reports should be published or not. Therefore, some major points about writing a case report for “*Traditional and Integrative Medicine*” are concisely discussed here.

Case reports are the preliminary data gathering stage for building evidence. We should select subjects that motivate practitioners to re-thinking about it or reassess it. Topics that may propagate a chain of research on a hypothesis are appropriate choices for case reports. These hypotheses may disconfirm previous hypotheses, support them or make new approaches to change our clinical practice. Additionally, we can share our clinical experience via case report articles, when it is difficult or impossible to design a clinical trial due to limited access to cases because of limited funds, ethical issues, patients’ non-compliance, and social problems [1,2].

We can report difficult and confusing cases with puzzling clinical features. Reports that may help physicians for improving their decision-making skills in clinical practice are other nice cases for publication.

A significant proportion of case reports are about unusual, unexpected, or rare conditions [3,4]. Therefore, some journals only consider unreported subjects without previous similar explanations. Such subjects may give critical information where there are little or no prior sounds and readers may not be able to achieve them from the medical literature [4-7]. However, other journals (including “*Traditional and Integrative Medicine*”) believe that publishing case reports of common features with previously published ones, implies the repetition of a problem, its importance and urgency (to be discussed in-depth), confirming an approach, and may show a causal relationship [8,9].

Moreover, a case report is a learning tool. Our report should have educational merit and be worthy of in-depth discussion. We can report positive points and successful experiences or negative points and our failures. Describing medical errors, their causes and consequences are educational points. Misdiagnosis and medical malpractice (especially when traditional and complementary practitioners ignored conventional diagnosis and treatment) can be important subjects for case reports in “*Traditional and Integrative Medicine*” [5,10]. Case reports are the ideal place to show adverse effects of a routine drug, unusual drug-drug, drug-food, or drug-nutrient interactions, unexpected events in the course of treatment, and TPM procedures’ complications and side effects [2].

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In the case reports, several aspects of a disease are worthy to be written. Its mechanism, histopathology and pathogenesis, its presentation, symptoms/signs, diagnosis/differential diagnosis, and even history and physical examination points can be discussed. Presenting specific clinical diagnoses that are different from conventional medicine (e.g. pulse and tongue diagnosis) is important, too. New or unique therapeutic approaches can be reported in case reports to describe the benefits of specific interventions (especially in the condition that there is no standard treatment) [7,8].

Finally, it should be noted that diseases are not the only valuable topics for case reports. Factors that may influence patients' compliance, unusual settings for medical care, and emotional aspects of medical practice are other scarcely selected themes for case reports [2,8,9].

#### **Conflict of Interests**

None.

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