

3. FLOWCHART: TWENTY STEPS TO WRITING & PUBLISHING A CASE REPORT/SERIES

1. WHY SHOULD I SHARE THIS CASE?

Does it bring something new? OR:

Does it corroborate other rare findings? OR:

Does it illustrate complex case management in a resource-limited setting?

IF YES TO ONE OR MORE OF THESE QUESTIONS, **PROCEED.**

2. WHAT IS MY MAIN MESSAGE?

You should be able to formulate your main message in one sentence.

ONCE YOU CAN CLEARLY FORMULATE YOUR MESSAGE, **PROCEED.**

3. WHO IS MY TARGET AUDIENCE?

You should be able to identify which communities of practice would benefit from reading your case report.

ONCE YOU KNOW FOR WHOM YOU ARE WRITING, **PROCEED.**

4. IS A CLINICAL CASE REPORT THE MOST APPROPRIATE PUBLICATION FORMAT FOR WHAT I WANT TO SHARE?

For the description of a single case, ask yourself: should I write a full-blown case report, or would a commentary or letter to the editor in an appropriate journal be a more efficient way of sharing this knowledge?

For a case series, make sure you are not confusing it with other study types such as an outbreak report or a retrospective cohort study.

WHEN YOU ARE CERTAIN YOUR PAPER QUALIFIES AS A FULL CLINICAL REPORT OR A CASE SERIES, **PROCEED.**

5. DOES THE BENEFIT OF PUBLISHING THIS CASE CLEARLY OUTWEIGH ANY RISKS?

Could there be any risks for the patient, the health structure, myself, MSF... by publishing this case?

ONCE YOU HAVE DETERMINED THE ABSENCE OF RISKS OR A WAY TO HANDLE THEM, **PROCEED.**

6. DO I HAVE VALIDATION FROM MY MANAGER TO PROCEED?

Usually your MedCo or health structure Director or Cell.

BEFORE GOING TO THE EFFORT OF WRITING UP YOUR CASE AND CONDUCTING A LITERATURE SEARCH, MAKE SURE YOUR MANAGER AGREES WITH YOUR SUBMITTING FOR PUBLICATION, THEN **PROCEED.**

7. CAN I ASK THE PATIENT(S) FOR INFORMED CONSENT?

Do I still have contact with the patient? Seek written informed consent or witnessed oral informed consent from your patient/his legal representative.

Your patient is definitively lost to follow up? Either do not go further or anonymize all patient-related information (as specified under "Ethical Considerations") in agreement with your manager.

WHEN YOU HAVE DEALT WITH THE ETHICS OF YOUR REPORT, **PROCEED.**

8. SHOULD THERE BE CO-AUTHORS ON THIS REPORT?

Usually a clinical team will have looked after the patient, discussed the case, etc.: think of including co-authors where appropriate.

WHEN YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED CO-AUTHORS AND SOUGHT THEIR AGREEMENT, **PROCEED.**

9. HAVE I FOLLOWED A TEMPLATE FOR MY REPORT?

A template helps you to structure your report and to make sure you have reported your case appropriately.

WHEN YOU HAVE CHECKED THE COMPLETENESS OF YOUR REPORT, **PROCEED.**

10. DO I NEED EDITORIAL SUPPORT?

The CCRI can provide you with medical writing, literature searching, and language editing.

MOST AUTHORS – ESPECIALLY FIRST-TIME AUTHORS – NEED EDITORIAL SUPPORT. **CONTACT** THE CCRI EDITORIAL SUPPORT TEAM.

11. DO I HAVE FINAL VALIDATION TO SUBMIT?

Before submitting anything for publication as a member of MSF staff, you need validation to proceed.

DOUBLECHECK YOU HAVE VALIDATION FROM YOUR MANAGER, THEN **PROCEED.**

12. HAVE I CHECKED THE AUTHOR GUIDELINES OF THE JOURNAL TO WHICH I AM SUBMITTING?

Different journals have different guidelines. Make sure you have respected them. Within the CCRI you will usually be submitting to Oxford Medical Case Reports.

CHECK : https://academic.oup.com/omcr/pages/General_Instructions, then **PROCEED.**

13. SUBMIT ONLINE

Within the CCRI you will usually be submitting to Oxford Medical Case Reports/

GO TO: <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/omcr>

14. YOUR PAPER WILL UNDERGO PEER REVIEW

Unless your paper is rejected outright because inappropriate for the journal, it will undergo peer review generally by two outside reviewers.

15. PEER REVIEW CAN LEAD TO FOUR OUTCOMES

a) Your paper is accepted without changes, b) your paper is rejected (reasons must be stated), c) your paper needs major revisions, d) your paper needs minor revisions.

16. REVISE YOUR PAPER AND RESPOND TO PEER REVIEW QUERIES

You do not have to agree with all the peer reviewers' comments, but you need to address every one of them.

17. SUBMIT REVISED PAPER

Your paper will be sent again to the same peer reviewers; they may ask you further questions or they may be satisfied; journal Editor will then submit to Editor-in-Chief with his/her own recommendation to proceed or not with publication.

18. YOUR PAPER IS ACCEPTED

MSF will cover open access fees associated with publication of your report.

19. COMMUNICATE

Share the link to your report with colleagues and other potentially interested parties. Your paper will also be included in the MSF Field Research Database and on the CCRI Webpage.

20. THINK ABOUT YOUR NEXT CASE!

Keep curious and on the lookout for cases that can be shared in the interest of future patients and global health knowledge.