



On the hunt for idle case reports

There is no doubt that case reports are an essential component of the dental and medical literature. Well-presented cases can relay interesting clinical experiences, special conditions, and pathologies to colleagues. This, of course, can make the experiences of other care providers with similar cases easier. During the past year, 378 case reports were submitted to *Quintessence International*, of which only 37 were accepted for publication. This low acceptance rate probably demonstrates the complexity of writing a good, publication-worthy case report. A report of a case should include new information that has never before been published: a technique, pathology, or even consequence of events in the clinic. I have to admit that I often find it significantly more difficult to come to a decision regarding a case report than to evaluate a research paper. A research paper can successfully pass the review process with solid methods, scientific rationale, and novelty. Conversely, it is harder to conclude whether a well-written, properly documented case report is too common or too rare. If the condition or pathology reported is indeed exceptionally rare, one must inquire about the chances that another clinician somewhere else in world will face a similar case or problem. On the other hand, it may be an eye opener for other clinicians. A report that describes a condition extensively discussed in the literature may be educational; however, I am not sure whether it should be considered for publication, especially as there are so many journals and publications available to the majority of the dentists in the world.

Hoping to make the review of cases more structured, along with the information mentioned above, reviewers usually ask the following three questions:

1. *Are the diagnosis processes and treatment provided accurate?*

This is a critical point. Occasionally, misdiagnosis can lead to the notion that the presented

condition has never before been published. It is the editorial board's responsibility to evaluate the case and find specialists in the field to review the manuscript. We are aware that the reviewers sometimes do not have the same broad picture the authors have had, but we prefer to be a little more disparaging to avoid publishing materials with which we are not utterly confident.

2. *Will the readers learn something new, or will the case provide the readers with innovative tools?*

If the answer is yes, there is no doubt that the case should be published. This may be an ultimate goal: a tool that may help other clinicians. We ask the reviewers' opinion about this matter as a routine part of the review process.

3. *Will the case be of interest to Quintessence International readers?*

Trying to predict the readers' interest is always a challenge. As mentioned earlier, we try to refer every manuscript to specialists in the appropriate field; however, we also try to include at least one general practitioner in the review panel.

The world of dentistry will benefit from unique cases and those that may add new knowledge to the existing literature. We are less inclined to publish cases that describe conditions that have already been vastly discussed in the literature. In our opinion, such cases can serve as great didactic material, but should not be published in peer-reviewed journals. That said, the editorial board of *Quintessence International* is not looking for extremely rare cases that are likely too rare to be encountered by other clinicians.

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