

## More than a Case: The Enduring Value of Clinical Case Reports in Medical Education

### Mais do que um Caso: O Valor Duradouro dos Relatos Clínicos na Educação Médica

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This issue of SPMI Case report presents a clinical case report on the rare complications of gallstone ileus and Bouveret syndrome.<sup>1</sup> The report highlights essential points, adding to our knowledge of these uncommon conditions and serving as a reminder of their existence. Notably, it discusses a complete cure achieved through minimally invasive enterolithotripsy. Other important points include the non-specific clinical presentation, the critical state of generally frail patients, and the crucial role of computed tomography in diagnosis.

This exemplary case report demonstrates the value of real-world examples in illustrating the multifaceted challenges and innovative solutions in medicine. By showcasing a condition that requires both swift diagnostic acumen and a nuanced therapeutic approach, it highlights how clinical reports not only serve as educational tools but also as repositories of evolving medical practices. Such cases underline the importance of keen observational skills and the ability to adapt established medical knowledge to unique patient scenarios.

Case reports are positioned at the foundational level within the hierarchy of evidence-based medicine.<sup>2</sup> This is due to their recognized limitations, including the lack of epidemiological quantities, the inability to generate causal inference and generalize observations, the presence of various uncontrollable biases, the risk of overinterpretation, a focus on rare events, and confidentiality constraints.<sup>3</sup> However, in contrast to evidence-based medicine, clinical case reports focus on individual patients, supporting personalized medicine. Actually, well-cited clinical case reports, though rare, have significantly influenced medical practice.<sup>4</sup>

The educational value of clinical case reports in internal medicine has not been extensively evaluated through rigorous methods.<sup>5</sup> Their interest has recently been renewed after years of rejections.<sup>4</sup> The potential beneficiaries include the readers and the authors. From the perspective of their readers, clinical case reports not only enhance the understanding of rare and complex diseases but also improve critical thinking

and diagnostic skills among medical students and professionals. These reports serve as effective tools for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, thereby fostering a deeper comprehension of patient care.<sup>6</sup> In this context, it is noteworthy that the readership of clinical case reports significantly exceeds their citation frequency.<sup>7</sup>

From the perspective of their authors, these reports frequently encourage the development of scholarly writing skills and contribute to the medical literature by documenting unique cases and treatment approaches.<sup>8</sup> By analyzing and reflecting on real-world scenarios, medical students and professionals can cultivate a habit of continuous learning and self-improvement, which is essential for their growth and success in the medical field. Nonetheless, writing demands a high level of precision. Consequently, a group of writers has developed a framework of 13 points, the CARE 2013 guidelines,<sup>9</sup> that authors are expected to adhere to. In this context, the role of Editors cannot be underestimated.

Numerous perspectives have underscored the collaborative nature of clinical case reports, which often necessitate interdisciplinary teamwork for the accurate diagnosis and treatment of complex cases.<sup>4,6,7</sup> This collaboration not only enriches the learning experience but also reflects the multidisciplinary approach essential in practical medical settings.

Furthermore, clinical case reports provide a platform for discussing ethical dilemmas and decision-making processes in patient care.<sup>4,6,7</sup> They often present scenarios where medical professionals must weigh the benefits and risks of various treatment options, consider patient preferences, and navigate the complexities of medical ethics. These discussions are invaluable for developing a well-rounded understanding of patient-centered care.

In conclusion, the academic evaluation of clinical case reports underscores their multifaceted role in medical education. They are indispensable for fostering critical thinking, enhancing diagnostic skills, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, and encouraging ethical reflection. By engaging with clinical case reports, medical students and professionals can continuously refine their skills and contribute to the advancement of medical knowledge. ■

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