

## Common Causes of Rejection of Case Reports

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Journal of Orthopaedic Case Reports has completed eight years in publication and maintains a healthy publication history. In last two years we have increased the number of issues from 4 per year to 6 per year. This means more number of articles are being reviewed and more articles are published every year. This also means more number of articles are now being rejected from the journal, which often makes authors unhappy. In this editorial I would like to write on the main causes of article rejection so that authors can improve upon this and improve their success rate.

Causes of rejection can be basically divided into two, modifiable and non-modifiable. Modifiable causes are generally related to the formatting and writing of the case report. Writing the report plays an equally important role in acceptance of the manuscript. The first rule is to format it as per the Journal guidelines. JOCR has standard guidelines which are put up on the website. Also authors can read previously published articles in JOCR to have better idea about the article formats. One of the specific points that I would like to mention here is the introduction and discussion part of the reports. Many case reports have the introduction as a real short and appears to be simply passing comment on the topic. All authors should understand that introduction is the part where they have to justify why their case report should be published and how reporting the case would add to literature. Introduction is not simply introducing the subject or providing historical perspective by writing who described the condition first. Introduction is a very important part of case report and should have complete justification of the need for the publication of the case report. The second part is discussion where many authors simply discuss the disease entity and various management plans. The true purpose of discussion is to discuss the salient results or salient conclusions from your case report. If you are reporting a rare case, the discussion should compare and contrast your case with the most recent 10 cases in a table. If the case report is about improvisation of a technique, this should be compared with other options that are available in current literature. The discussion should be focused on the main results or the main learning points from the case report and not a overall broad discussion of the disease. Although these are not major causes of rejection, but it would help in a borderline case being accepted. Another major area of improvement is a comprehensive but focussed literature review, specifically including literature from last 5 years. Many authors include old historical papers in references, which is not wrong, however they fail to include recent articles in their review. Recent similar papers must be reviewed and compared to your case and preferably a table with comparative literature should be included in the case report.

Non-modifiable causes are one where the case report does not reach enough priority in for publication due to inherent nature of the case sent for publication. This may be a well written report but if a common case is sent to us which doesn't add anything to current understanding of the disease, it can't be published. For example, a case report of curettage and bone grafting of giant cell tumor of distal femur will be rejected, event if it is well written and formatted. Authors should ask themselves some essential question before sending a case report to JOCR, the foremost amongst it is whether publication of this case will enhance the knowledge of readers and help them provide better treatment to their patients. Authors should always keep in mind that the real purpose of case reports is to add to the existing knowledge and this point should be highlighted in the case report in abstract, in introduction and in discussion. The first line of review for a case report is always the author himself. He must objectively look at his case report and review the literature to decide for himself if the case report is publishable.

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Unless there is substance enough in the case, it will not get published in reputed journals, even if it is written and packaged well.

Of course the other factors like plagiarism, duplicate publication, data manipulations are immediate cause of rejections but all these are modifiable and authors should take utmost care to maintain the authenticity of the paper and integrity of themselves and their institutes.

For any queries regarding rejection criteria or rejection letter, you can contact the editor at the official editorial email and we can provide you a detailed reply if needed and also a re-review if the editors feel that it is warranted.

Regards

Dr. Ashok Shyam

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