

## Editorial

# Celebrating Teaching Case Reports

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This edition of *Optometric Education* celebrates teaching case reports. The concept of teaching case reports for this journal was developed by Barry Kran, OD, FAAO, from the New England College of Optometry, and Elizabeth Hoppe, OD, MPH, DRPH, former editor of the journal. The first two teaching case reports ? *Management of Anisometropic Amblyopia and Head Posture in a Patient With Oculocutaneous Albinism* by Dr. Kran and *A Case of Bilateral Ocular Ischemic Syndrome* by Andrea L. Murphy, OD, Richard Frick, OD, FAAO, and Dorothy Hitchmoth, OD, FAAO ? were published in the winter 2009 edition. Since 2009, the journal has published 64 teaching case reports. I commend Drs. Hoppe and Kran for developing this creative merger, which has benefited faculty, students and clinicians.

A teaching case report combines an interesting clinical case with teaching elements. It is a teaching experience and a learning experience. Teaching case reports represent a collection of cases that are researched, organized and peer-reviewed. The cases can be used in a didactic classroom, clinical setting or in the remediation of students. Little did we know that in 2020 they would also be used to augment students' clinical experiences during a global pandemic.

Writing a successful teaching case report is within the grasp of all clinical faculty. To get started, authors should identify an interesting prospective case. The case should demonstrate clinical importance and relevance. Authors should discern why the chosen case or learning is important to a student's academic career. Authors should read the description of teaching case report elements below and consult the [Optometric Education publication guidelines](#), which contain additional important information about content, presentation and format. Knowing this information before writing and submitting saves time and minimizes revisions. In addition, authors should search through published teaching case reports and not waste time writing about a topic that is similar to what has been published recently. The goal is to create a collection of cases that represent a diversity of ocular conditions. (Access the archive by clicking on OPTOMETRIC EDUCATION in the navigation bar at the [journal's website](#).)

### Elements of a Teaching Case Report

The required elements of a teaching case report are background, case description, education guidelines, discussion, conclusion and references.

**Background:** The background is a brief introduction to the case. It contains the intended audience, relevance of the case ("so what?" and "who cares?"), along with background information on the ocular condition/disease presented in the case. The intended audience may be identified for the entire case. In some complex cases, the intended audience may differ for different aspects of the case.

**Case description:** The case description is the presentation of the case. The author should hold all aspects of discussion until the education guidelines or discussion section. This allows educators to extrapolate data from the case without having to dissect out discussion comments. Tables, graphs, diagrams and pictures are usually helpful. Original test results, e.g., visual fields and optical coherence

tomography, are encouraged. Patients should be described as a person not a case, and patient confidentiality should be respected at all times.

*Education guidelines:* This section includes the teaching components of the case report, i.e., the information needed to facilitate a discussion of the case. The teaching components are the learning objectives, key concepts, discussion points (questions to facilitate discussion), teaching methodology and assessment (how the learning objectives will be assessed).

*Discussion:* The discussion section is the vehicle for teaching the case. It should reflect clinical as well as education elements. Teaching methodology and discussion points should drive the discussion. The discussion section should include a summary and interpretation of key findings, comparison to known findings in the literature, how and why decisions were made and, if applicable, what lessons are to be learned from this experience.

*Conclusion:* The conclusion summarizes the case and learning experience.

*References:* References should be listed in the order they are cited in the text. They should be cited in the text by superscript numbers. [National Library of Medicine reference style](#) should be used.

Also, teaching case reports should be submitted with an abstract of approximately 100 words and approximately five key words that reflect the primary subject matter of the paper to assist reference librarians and others in retrieval and cross-indexing. Acknowledgments and disclosures should also be included if applicable.

### **A Valuable Opportunity for All Faculty**

Teaching case reports are peer-reviewed publications. They provide faculty the opportunity to showcase their clinical acumen as well as teaching methodology and creativity. At many institutions, a published teaching case report can be a valuable asset in a portfolio for promotion or tenure. It provides insight and understanding regarding teaching philosophy. Because many faculty are not formally trained in education, writing a teaching case report provides a learning opportunity for the author. All faculty who are engaged in patient care and teaching should consider this opportunity and write a teaching case report.

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