

Obtaining patient consent to publish a case report in EMJ

In order to publish case reports at EMJ, authors need to ensure that appropriate informed consent has been obtained from the patient and that the patient has received the relevant information regarding the possible consequences of reporting, prior to publication. Permissions for the use of information contained in medical records should be obtained in accordance with your institution's policies.

Definitions:

1. **Anonymity:** This refers to the duty authors have to remove patient identifiable information from their manuscripts. Although this may not always be 100% achievable, particularly for rare cases, authors should ensure that the manuscript has been anonymised as much as possible.
2. **Confidentiality:** This refers to the duty authors have to protect patient information so that their identity is not revealed.
3. **Consent:** This refers to the author requesting permission to publish the case report and any accompanying images from the patient, or where appropriate, the next of kin. This consent should be in written form and the patient must be informed of the possibility that they could be identified despite best efforts to anonymise the manuscript.

Consent must be obtained prior to the publication of any case report or a case series. In the instance of a deceased patient, consent from the next of kin is required prior to publication.

If the patient is a child, parental consent must be obtained, and the author and family must consider that children may not understand the implications of publication.

If the patient does not have the mental capacity to provide informed consent, consent from the next of kin is required, and attempts to include the patient in the decision-making process (where appropriate) should be taken.

Please ensure that you have obtained consent in keeping with your institution's guidance and procedures.

The individual obtaining consent from the patient (or where appropriate from the next of kin or parent), must have the appropriate authority to do so and have the relevant training to take informed consent. For example, this should be the senior responsible clinician, or a member of their team with the relevant training and skill.

The authors should highlight to the patient that despite their best efforts and the journals publishing practices, the journal cannot guarantee 100% anonymity and there is a risk that they could be identified following publication.

Please ensure that patient-identifying information has been removed from the case report and images prior to submission. Examples of identifying information include, but are not exhaustive of name, exact age, identity numbers, date of birth, occupation, place of residence, imaging, photos, and exact dates of admission/death/discharge/scans. Any patient-specific information must be de-identified. Details such as occupation or place of residence should only be included if they are of direct relevance to the case. If photographs are being used in the case report, please ensure that eyes are covered in facial photos.

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Please use our consent form to obtain the appropriate, informed consent from patients before you submit your manuscript to EMJ. Please use this or an equivalent form in another language to obtain patient consent. ***Please do NOT submit the consent form to EMJ directly. Please keep the original, signed consent form at the treating institution.** Please only submit your manuscript after you have obtained patient consent.

Whilst EMJ does not ask authors to submit consent forms with their manuscript, we trust that authors will use these forms to obtain informed, written patient consent prior to submitting the case report to the journal. The manuscript should include a statement relaying that the authors obtained the appropriate, written, informed consent from the patient to publish the case report and any accompanying images. If authors have not confirmed that they have obtained appropriate consent, the manuscript will not be processed further.

An example statement that authors can add to their manuscript if they have obtained the appropriate, written patient (or next of kin) consent is: *“The authors obtained written, informed consent from the patient/next of kin/parent (delete as applicable) to publish the case report and any accompanying images prior to publication.”*

If you have used a different consent form to the one provided by EMJ, please submit a **blank** version of this, so that EMJ can assess whether all EMJ required criteria are covered.

Additional Resources

1. [Journals' Best Practices for ensuring consent for publishing medical case reports: guidance from COPE | COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics](#)
2. [Microsoft Word - CAREchecklist-English.docx \(squarespace.com\)](#)