

EDITORIAL

Collaboration between Médecins Sans Frontières and Oxford Medical Case Reports

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With the publication of a case of paediatric bullous dermatosis from Guinea [1], we are very pleased to announce the launch of a collaboration among Oxford University Press, 'Oxford Medical Case Reports', and Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). Physicians have been writing and publishing detailed descriptions of their patients' health conditions for millennia, but the first case reports journal as we know it today was that of the Royal College of Physicians of London, instigated in the 18th century by the pioneering doctor William Heberden. Since then, medicine has advanced out of all recognition (notably by being able to apply statistical methods to medical research), but the value of the individual case report or care series remains. This is especially true for rare conditions or those occurring in situations out of the ordinary.

Currently, most of the case reports being published in prominent journals come from physicians working in well (or relatively well) resourced settings. By contrast, Médecins Sans Frontières provides health care in areas where health structures are scarce due to poverty, war or natural disasters. Often this poses medical and clinical challenges that are not widely recognized or published in academic journals. Our collaboration has the objective to provide an outlet for health care workers in areas with limited resources to publish their clinical experiences so as to share this knowledge with others working

in similar settings. The open access model of publishing is ideal for this purpose as it permits free and full access to material for health care workers and patients.

Case reports from resource-limited regions present their own challenges—not least the patient's consent to publish. Between OUP and MSF and with advice from the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), we have developed guidance for obtaining consent and we will discuss these issues in a subsequent editorial dealing specifically with the ethical challenges.

On behalf of OUP, OMCR and MSF we look forward to publishing more case reports and case series from healthcare workers in humanitarian and resource-limited settings.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

None to declare.

REFERENCE

1. Valle del Barrio B, Luraschi D, Micheletti R, Hiffler L, Airias A. Bullous dermatosis suspected in an eight-month-old child in Guinea-Bissau: a case report. *Oxf Med Case Reports*. doi:10.1093/omcr/omz004.

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