The CARE reporting guideline writing guide

For writing impactful clinical case report articles that can be understood and used by a wide audience.

|  |
| --- |
| Note |
| If you have not used a writing guide before, read about our suggested [writing process](https:/jamesrharwood.github.io/equator-guidelines-website/about/writing-using-reporting-guidelines.html).  This guide is not a template. Don’t expect to fill it in and end up with a finished article. Instead, think of it as an exercise book.   1. Collate information and make notes in this guide; 2. Delete the prompts and headings, reorganise your notes into a narrative structure, moving content to tables, figures, or appendices when appropriate, thereby creating a writing outline. 3. Draft, revise, and edit your text in a separate file, referring to your outline throughout.   Before you begin, double check that CARE is the [most applicable reporting guideline](https:/jamesrharwood.github.io/equator-guidelines-website/guidelines/care/index.html?#applicability) for your work. Other reporting guidelines have their own writing guide.  The [UK EQUATOR Centre training](https:/jamesrharwood.github.io/equator-guidelines-website/training.html) helps researchers develop writing skills and to use reporting guidelines (like this one) to write research articles and applications that are complete, concise, and compelling. It covers many of the items of the CARE reporting guideline, including how to prepare effective abstracts, titles, introduction and discussion sections, as well as how to use writing guides to create writing outlines, how to turn outlines into drafts, and drafts into polished text. |

# Sections

## [1. Title](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/title.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| The area of focus and “case report” should appear in the title. |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [2. Keywords](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/keywords.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| The key elements of this case in 2–5 words. |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [3. Abstract](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/abstract.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| 3a – Introduction: What does this case add?  3b – Case presentation:   * The main symptoms of the patient(s). * The main clinical findings. * The main diagnoses and interventions. * The main outcomes.   3c – Conclusion: What are the main “take-away” lessons from this case? |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [4. Introduction](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/introduction.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| Brief background summary of the case referencing the relevant medical literature. |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [5a. Patient information](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/patient-information.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| 5a – Demographic information of the patient (age, gender, ethnicity, occupation).  5b – Main symptoms of the patient (chief complaint).  5c – Medical, family, and psychosocial history—including lifestyle and genetic information whenever possible, details about relevant comorbidities, and past interv… |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [6. Clinical findings](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/clinical-findings.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| Describe the relevant physical examination (PE) findings. |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [7. Timeline](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/timeline.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| Depict important date and times in this case (table or figure). |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [8. Diagnostic assessment](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/diagnostic-assessment-and-diagnosis.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| 8a – Diagnostic methods (e.g., physical examination, laboratory testing, imaging, questionnaires)  8b – Diagnostic challenges (e.g., financial, language, or cultural)  8c – Diagnostic reasoning including other diagnoses considered  8d – Prognostic characteristics (e.g., staging) where applicable. |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [9. Therapeutic Intervention](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/therapeutic-interventions.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| 9a – Types of intervention (e.g., pharmacologic, surgical, preventive, self-care)  9b – Administration (e.g., dosage, strength, duration)  9c – Changes in intervention (with rationale). |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [10. Follow up and outcomes](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/follow-up-and-outcomes.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| 10a – Clinician and patient-assessed outcomes  10b – Important follow-up test results (positive and negative)  10c – Intervention adherence and tolerability (and how this was assessed)  10d – Adverse and unanticipated events. |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [11. Discussion](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/discussion.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| Discussion (including conclusion):  11a – Strengths and limitations of the management of this case  11b – Relevant medical literature  11c – Rationale for conclusions (including assessment of cause and effect)  11d – Main “take-away” lessons of this case report. |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [12. Patient perspective](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/patient-perspective.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| When appropriate patients should share their perspectives on the treatments they received. |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## [13. Informed consent](https:/resources.equator-network.org/guidelines/care/items/informed-consent.html)

|  |
| --- |
| Things To Consider |
| Did the patient give informed consent? Please provide if requested. |

* Make notes here:
* …
* …

## How to cite

Describe how you used CARE at the end of your Methods section, referencing the resources you used e.g.,

‘We used the CARE reporting guideline(1) to draft this manuscript, and the CARE reporting checklist(2) when editing, included in supplement A’

If you use a reporting checklist, remember to include it as a supplement when publishing so that readers can easily find information and see how you have interpreted the guidance.

1. Gagnier JJ, Kienle G, Altman DG, Moher D, Sox H, Riley D, et al. The CARE guidelines: Consensus-based clinical case reporting guideline development. Case Reports [Internet]. 2013 Oct;2013:bcr2013201554. Available from: <https://casereports.bmj.com/content/2013/bcr-2013-201554>

2. Gagnier JJ, Kienle G, Altman DG, Moher D, Sox H, Riley D, et al. The CARE reporting checklist. In: Harwood J, Albury C, Beyer J de, Schlüssel M, Collins G, editors. The EQUATOR network reporting guideline platform [Internet]. The UK EQUATOR Centre; 2025. Available from: [https:/jamesrharwood.github.io/equator-guidelines-website/guidelines/care/care-checklist.docx](https://https:/jamesrharwood.github.io/equator-guidelines-website/guidelines/care/care-checklist.docx)