

All About Case Reports

Q: What is a case report?

A: A case report is a detailed report that often observes either an individual case or a small group of cases. They are based on unique or unexpected events, and outline the symptoms, signs, diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of the case.

Q: What is done with a case report?

A: Typically, a case report will be submitted to a medical journal for publishing or a medical conference to present the case. This allows the unique case to be shared within the medical and scientific communities.

Q: What personal details will be included in a case report?

A: Case reports have to comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Physicians and their team may access your medical records, but any personal details that will be included in the case report will be listed in the signed consent form. If there is any identifiable information (images, specific dates, etc.) included in the case report, the physician and their team will require your written authorization. If there is no written authorization, the team will not include any identifiable information. For example, if a physician wants to include operative photos, it must be stated on the consent form. The physician and their team will also be mindful to only include the minimum amount of personal detail necessary. Photos, for example, would be cropped to include only the relevant area. For other details, only information applicable to the case would be included.

Q: Does ProMedica's Institutional Review Board review case reports?

A: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a committee whose purpose is to ensure the rights and welfare of those who volunteer to participate in research, case reports and more. The IRB is authorized to review all types of research on human subjects, including projects not subject to federal oversight. At ProMedica, it is required to submit a case report determination form so the IRB can review and approve the case report. This is done to ensure that the case report is being conducted appropriately.

Q: What are the risks and benefits of participating?

A: Although your personal information collected or obtained will be kept confidential and fully protected by the law, there is a limited risk associated with this case report that could result in a loss of confidentiality by virtue of your unique experience. The information we disclose with your permission may no longer be protected by the HIPAA Privacy Rule. This means your information could be used and re-disclosed by the people we give it to without your permission. There will be no direct benefit, but the information shared could improve the care received by others in the future.

Q: Want to learn more?

A: ProMedica's IRB and Research Department are happy to help answer questions about case reports. Please email Research@ProMedica.org or PHSIRB@ProMedica.org to learn more.