GMS Ophthalmology Cases – An Open Access Journal

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

presenting the first edition of "*GMS Ophthalmology Cases – An Open Access Journal*" (GMS OC) we take the opportunity to reflect on whether it is worthwhile to found yet another case report journal. As for GMS OCOA, it is the open access quality of publishing that is original and pertinent to case reporting. Compared to subscription journals case reports published via "open access" achieve a wider reach, because they are more likely to be located and because they are downloaded more frequently. In subscription journals case reports are usually difficult to publish. Most editors give citation impact priority. Nevertheless, the educational nature of case reports means an important reference library to clinicians and researchers alike. For that reason GMS OC is dedicated to case reports but refined by the feature of barrier-free access. The full text version is readable and downloadable free of charge, including images and even videos. The latter may be especially helpful to illustrate surgical interventions. There is no copyright transfer from the author to the publisher! Costs are an important barrier amongst authors and readers of case reports alike. We are in a situation to avoid publishing fees altogether, at least within the first year of opening. Thereafter a moderate fee will be claimed. The publisher, German Medical Science, exponent and part of the "German National Library of Medicine", is a non-profit organization, dedicated to distribute research results of the medical science worldwide (see: http://www.egms.de/en/terms.htm). Highly secure servers of "German Institute of Medical Documentation and Information (DIMDI)", guarantee a sustained access and referencing of papers and data. GMS OC will be screened by MEDLINE and will collect impact factor credits.

A case report is a detailed report of the symptoms, signs, diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up of an individual patient. Case reports usually describe an unusual or novel occurrence (Wikipedia). Educational case reports provide a brief review of the literature, while the case used to frame the experience may not be new. Far from a "second-class" publication, many original observations are first presented as case reports. Christiaan Barnard, for example, published his first heart transplant as a case report [1]. While case reports are a valuable contribution to the literature, they have certain limitations: Patients may introduce a variety of confounding factors into their lives that may affect the patient's response to care. One may hypothesize patient response, but it can only be tested during experimental trials.
May this journal be a platform helping to diagnose, to treat, to comprehend. We look forward to your contributions!

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References

1. Barnard CN. The operation. A human cardiac transplant: an interim report of a successful operation performed at Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town. S Afr Med J. 1967;41(48):1271-4.

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