

Ethical Review of Case Reports

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 and as such, remain one of the cornerstones of medical progress and provide many new ideas in medicine ⁽¹⁾

Individual patient case reports are rarely generalizable, therefore they do not meet the TCPS2 definition of research⁽²⁾ and do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Interior Health (IH) Research Ethics Board (REB). If more than two cases are being analyzed jointly, the IH REB will review the project as a research study⁽³⁾.

Issues to consider when writing a Case Report

1. Consent

- a) You must ensure the patient is aware that you plan to publish a report about their case and that you have obtained their consent for this.
- b) If applicable, obtain consent from the patient's parent, guardian, or next of kin.
- c) If consent is not possible, you must provide the justification.
- d) If consent is obtained verbally, it must be documented in the patient's medical record.
- e) Consent templates are available online (See References).

2. Privacy:

- a) Ensure that the patient cannot be identified in the published report. Protecting patient privacy may require more than simply removing direct identifiers, depending upon factors such as the nature of the medical condition, geographic location, and/or patient age.
- b) Confirm that no identifiable data will leave Interior Health.
- c) Describe how patient privacy will be safeguarded over the life of the project, including when the data will be destroyed.
- d) If recording such as photography, video, or diagnostic imaging may be used, the patient must be informed, including if the image(s) could lead to identification of the individual.

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka'pamux, Secwépemc, St'át'imc, syilx, and Tšilhqot'in Nations where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

3. Publication Requirements

- a) If the journal in which you plan to publish requires a letter of exemption from ethical review, please include this information with your consultation request.
- b) The IH REB does not provide retroactive exemptions or approvals.

4. Contact

If you have questions about Case Reports, please email researchethics@interiorhealth.ca.

References:

1. Guidelines To Writing A Clinical Case Report. Heart Views. 2017 Jul-Sep;18(3):104-105. doi: 10.4103/1995-705X.217857. PMID: 29184619; PMCID: PMC5686928.
2. [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2 \(2022\) – Glossary](#)
3. UBC CREB Guidance Note 4.4.2 Case Reports, retrieved from <https://researchethics.ubc.ca/clinical-research-ethics/creb-guidance-notes/ubc-clinical-research-ethics-general-guidance-notes>.
4. https://sunnybrook.ca/uploads/Case_Report_Consent_Form_Template_07JUN2010.doc
5. https://www.fraserhealth.ca/-/media/Project/FraserHealth/FraserHealth/Health-Professionals/Research-and-Evaluation-Services/Forms-guidance-notes-and-templates/Forms_guidance_notes_templates_201902/201902_Case_report_consent_form_template.doc

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