

Multidisciplinary Clinical Case Study

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This issue of the *Southern Medical Journal (SMJ)* introduces a new format for case reports that emphasizes and requires multidisciplinary and interprofessional content. After a 5-year moratorium on unidimensional and single-specialty case reports, we believe that the multidisciplinary clinical case study format will align with the *Journal's* mission as a broad-based, interprofessional, clinically focused educational journal. Because the comprehensive clinical care of a patient in the current healthcare environment is a team effort, the *SMJ* strives to present relevant and patient-focused articles from a wide range of professionals who contribute to patient care. Although the *SMJ's* subject headings reflect the breadth of specialty care categories, we consider manuscripts submitted by a wide range of healthcare professionals. It is our belief that clinicians and their patients benefit from scientific journalism that includes the perspectives and expertise of the many professionals who effectively contribute to patient care.

The concept of the multidisciplinary clinical case study requires the input of and comments from all of the specialists who contributed in a substantive way to the care of the patient in the case study. The multidisciplinary clinical case study should have broad educational and clinical content of interest to more than just one specialty. Its primary thrust should be clinical knowledge offered by multiple clinical and diagnostic services that were involved in the patient's care. The primary authors can be of one specialty or admitting service, but the other specialists who consulted to the patient's case should be offered the opportunity to be added as coauthors, based on their contributions to the content of the multidisciplinary clinical case study and the patient's care. This means that clinicians and diagnosticians from the various services involved in the patient's care would offer pertinent comments, evaluations, perspectives, and recommendations—as is commonly done in difficult clinical case challenges—and these comments will be part of the multidisciplinary clinical case study manuscript, reflecting the true nature of interprofessional care.

The primary patient case can be from any of the specialties or subject headings of the *Southern Medical Journal* (Bioethics & Medical Education, Emergency & Disaster Medicine, Medicine & Medical Specialties, Mental Health, Public Health & Environmental Medicine, Quality Care & Patient Safety, Surgery & Surgical Specialties, Women's & Children's Health), but the multidisciplinary clinical case study format requires multidisciplinary input from all of the pertinent specialties or services that participated in the care of the patient. As such, the successful manuscript submitted to the *SMJ* in this category will contain the pertinent comments, evaluations, and professional perspectives of specialists or service consultants that enhance the educational value of the multidisciplinary clinical case study and reflect the real-world situation of a team approach to patient care. Contributing consultants and co-providers should be invited as coauthors, reflective of their contributions to the manuscript; however, it is important that the multidisciplinary clinical case study be a team effort and reflect the process through which a difficult clinical challenge is managed in contemporary health care.

The first multidisciplinary clinical case study is published in this month's issue, a case of Castleman disease. It was submitted by a comprehensive clinical care team from the San Antonio Military Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. This multidisciplinary clinical case study will provide potential authors a guide for the development of their own manuscript. Further details on the format of the multidisciplinary clinical case study, which must be closely followed, can be found in the *SMJ's* Instructions for Authors section of the *Journal's* Web site (<http://edmgr.ovid.com/smj/accounts/ifauth.htm>). Submissions under this category will be prescreened by the editorial staff for compliance with the intent and format required of the multidisciplinary clinical case study.

We believe that this new format will be an excellent opportunity for residents, fellows, and junior faculty members (with senior faculty mentoring) to appreciate the interprofessional approach to patient care and to work with other specialties in the development of a manuscript, thereby fostering enhanced communication with, and an appreciation of the role of, other professionals in clinical practice.

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The author has no financial relationships to disclose and no conflicts of interest to report.

Accepted November 10, 2015.

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0038-4348/0-2000/109-77

DOI: 10.14423/SMJ.0000000000000405