

## MESSAGE THERAPY FOUNDATION CASE REPORT CONTEST

### INTRODUCTION

The Massage Therapy Foundation is delighted to invite you to participate in our Case Report Contest. This contest fosters an opportunity to develop and hone research skills by conducting a research case report in the format of a professional research paper. Top-rated reports will receive recognition in the way of publication opportunities and cash rewards. Please see the Foundation's Mission and Goals at [www.massagetherapyfoundation.org](http://www.massagetherapyfoundation.org).

### CASE REPORT GUIDELINES

#### CASE REPORT STRUCTURE

Students and practitioners (hereby referred to as "practitioners") must report on independent clinical interventions on one client. This is a quantitative report which includes completing a literature review on the presenting condition or client goal; creating and implementing a treatment plan in accordance with the literature, the needs of the client, and the practitioners' expertise; reporting the results; discussing the implications of the outcomes; and offering suggestions for future studies. Because a case report is on one client only, we will not accept a case series on multiple clients. Submissions of this type will not be scored by the reviewers.

#### Logistics of the case report

- Practitioners must conduct a minimum of five (5) massage therapy sessions with the participating client.
- It is highly recommended that massage therapy be the only new intervention in the client's treatment plan.
- Client confidentiality and the security of health information must be maintained. Do not include any information that may lead to personal identification.

#### Document Preparation and Submission

- The case report document must be double-spaced, using 12 pt. font size, in Times (or similar) font with 1 inch margins on all sides, written in the English language, and saved as a PDF document. Tables and figures, if included, should be in line with text and not placed at the end of the document.
- The report must be concisely and coherently written and follow the prescribed format.
- The document must be 2000-4000 words, excluding the cover page and references. ***The entire submitted document should not exceed 20 pages.***
- The case report should include an intervention that is interesting, pertinent to the massage therapy profession, and the understanding of massage's impact is not extensively documented in-peer reviewed journals.
- Reports must be submitted online through the MTF grant portal at <https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=massagetherapy> by June 1.

#### THE CASE REPORT

A well-written case report describes the client's condition, a well thought out and documented treatment plan and assessment, and results. A beautifully conducted case intervention will lose much of its value if it is not presented in a succinct and coherent manner. Therefore, scientific papers are written in a style that is intended to be clear and concise. Their purpose is to inform an audience about an important issue and to document the particular approach they used to investigate that issue.

Case reports are written in the same manner as research reports. However, case reports are not research. They are a report of the assessment, intervention, and results of a single client. The therapist will have developed a treatment protocol and ways to measure the treatment

outcomes for the individual client with the intent being to help them reach their individual goals. Research studies, on the other hand, are developed with the intent of assessing the therapy and frequently focus on the proper and consistent administration of the therapy rather than modification of the therapy to improve the effects on the client. Research with human subjects requires approval from and oversight by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to help protect the rights and welfare of the human participants. **If the submitted manuscript is determined to be a research study and not a case report it will not be considered for this contest.** If you have questions or concerns about the possibility of your case report being considered research, please contact the Foundation for clarification.

The Massage Therapy Foundation has a hub of their website dedicated to Case Reports available for free here: <https://massagetherapyfoundation.org/education/case-report-hub/>

The format is based upon recommendations for consistency and quality in case reporting. Please see the Munk and Boulanger article "Adaptation of the CARE Guidelines for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork Publications: Efforts to Improve the Impact of Case Reports" (<http://www.ijtmb.org/index.php/ijtmb/article/view/251/303>)

### **Cover Page**

Include the title, word counts for abstract, word counts for body of the report. For online submission, please DO NOT include author's name or contact information to allow for a blind review. The title should include the phrase "case report."

### **Acknowledgements**

Please recognize any non-authors who made substantial contribution to the work including any mentors or contributors and a brief description of how they contributed. Do not include the client's name.

### **Abstract/Key Words**

An abstract is a condensed version of the paper (300 word limit) and should be structured to include the following sections: background/introduction, objectives for the case report, case presentation (abbreviated client demographics, brief health history, diagnosis), baseline assessment measures, treatment(s), practitioner's background, results/findings, and discussion.

Frequently, readers of a scientific journal will only read the abstract, choosing to read the full text of only those papers that are most relevant to them. For this reason, and because abstracts are frequently made available by various internet abstracting services, this section is an important summary of the case. The information in the abstract should mirror the information in the body of the paper.

**Key Words** - Citation indexes use key words (or phrases) to help people search for relevant articles. Practitioners should list 3-5 Keywords with reliance on the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) of the National Library of Medicine. For more information go to [www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/).

### **Introduction**

In this section, the practitioner should build a case for selecting the client or intervention to observe. There should be enough background information on the condition being studied for a reader to understand the topic. Extraneous information should be excluded. Findings of previously published studies must be presented to help explain why the current case is of scientific interest. This is called a literature review and should be thorough, relating to the topic of interest. If existing treatment-related research is limited, related articles can be used to support clinical decision making and provide evidence-based rationale for massage treatment. The practitioner should synthesize the research well and integrated it into their explanation/case of why the case is of scientific interest. The writing should flow seamlessly between published

ideas and practitioner ideas. It should be evident the practitioner thoroughly understood the research and directly applies it to the case study.

No results or data from the case should be in this section. The last sentence(s) of the Introduction should state the objective and/or hypothesis: the research question. Outcomes and measurement tools can be stated here as well. This should make a smooth transition from the Introduction section to the Methods section.

Appropriate use of citations from the literature review will be emphasized in the scoring process. References must include at least some of the following: academic books, peer-reviewed journals such as *International Journal of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork* or *Journal of Bodywork & Movement Therapies*. Students are expected to utilize reputable biomedical and massage therapy databases as part of their literature search strategy. Use of non-peer reviewed sources such as *Massage Therapy Journal (MTJ)*, *Massage Today*, and seminar or course notes, etc. should be kept to a minimum. Peer-reviewed articles can be found on various online databases such as [PubMed.gov](http://PubMed.gov) and [Google Scholar](http://Google Scholar). See more information in the reference section below.

## Methods

This section provides all the methodological details necessary for another practitioner to duplicate the work. It includes the client profile and the treatment plan. It is safe to assume that readers have the same basic skills as the practitioner, but don't know the specific details of the therapeutic process. An important part of writing a scientific paper is deciding which information should be condensed, and what needs to be described in detail.

**Patient/Client information:** This portion should contain a detailed account of the patient/client. The medical story should be explained comprehensively enough so the reader can utilize their own clinical decision making. This section includes a presentation of the client's demographics (i.e. age, gender, occupation), medical history and diagnosis given by a medical professional, if any. This should include the kind of professional that arrived at the diagnosis and if applicable, include information/findings from other providers about the client's condition. Prior treatments should be explained clearly, specifically the client's experience with massage for the condition. The practitioner should include massage contraindications, whether the client has consulted/informed their doctor about receiving massage if under direct medical care, and a fully-explained description of the client's desired outcomes.

**Intervention:** A description of the practitioner as well as the environment in which the massage was performed should begin this section. Intervention needs to be clearly described, easy to understand and easily replicated. Description should include intervention(s), number of treatments, duration, frequency, anatomical location of massage application. Applied techniques should be evidence-based, safe for the condition, involve clinical decision making, and is supported by the literature and clinical decision making.

A crucial component of the treatment plan is the practitioner's rationale for the particular massage/bodywork technique(s) used. Treatment choices must be supported with reference to the available literature, massage texts/instructional handbooks, and safe practice guidelines. If there are no direct references to massage therapy for the condition, the student should indicate why the treatment approach was chosen based on an understanding of how the condition typically presents and how it presents in the client. References from other disciplines (e.g., physical therapy, occupational therapy, etc.) may also be helpful.

Report if any health promotion/health education messages and/or client “homework” are given. Avoid using trademarked names of modalities. Include a summary of any changes that occur during the course in the Treatment Plan, along with rationalization for such change.

It should be evident that informed consent was obtained. **If informed consent documents are not complete and included in the appendix, the case report will not be scored.** Clearly include information about the client’s informed consent at the end of the section to meet ethical standards.

## Results

This section presents the results of the intervention but should not attempt to interpret their meaning. Data should be presented in an organized and easily understandable manner; typically raw data should not be presented. Practitioners are encouraged to succinctly present findings in either a table or graph format. The outcomes should be presented in the same order they’ve been introduced, and no new outcomes should be presented here. Note that data should be presented only once. If a table or figure is presented it should be relevant, clear, organized and accurate. Graphs should have appropriate labels including a chart title and axes titles; the graph’s range should match the assessment range. The written portion of the report must refer to any table or figure, if presented. Make sure to also include how the client/patient tolerated and followed the treatment plan and how this was monitored. Additionally, if any client “homework” is given, results of client compliance should be reported.

It’s important to include the patient/client’s voice and thoughts on treatment(s) and outcome(s) can strengthen the report. Comments and quotes from the patient/client in the discussion section allow them to be heard about their experience. The practitioner should state whether there were any adverse or unexpected events.

## Discussion

The Discussion section provides an opportunity to summarize and evaluate the outcomes of the treatment process. It is also important to integrate the findings from the case into the body of literature that currently exists on the topic. Therefore, this section should:

- Starts narrowly and ends broadly
- Overall findings interpreted clearly and concisely. No raw data.
- Restate objective and relate findings back to objective
- Explanation of how the findings add literature and what is already known.
- Findings are related to client's goal(s)
- Findings are not overemphasized. The practitioner does not describe findings as “significant” or use the word “prove”
- Only the outcomes that were presented in the results section are discussed.
- The practitioner speculates on why the treatment(s) had an effect or not.
- Limitations clearly discussed, including problems with methods and any abnormalities in the data.
- Future implications for practice, education and research explained
- Suggestions for future research are shared
- If massage was provided with other interventions, it must be noted when reporting the findings
- Final conclusions need to relate to an “n” of one person

## References – cited using the American Medical Association Style

The strength of a report is, in part, dependent on the citations referenced. The points are based on following the reference style as well as using primary research literature to support the background (literature review), case presentation (clinical findings, assessment measures, and therapeutic intervention), and discussion sections. Therefore, it is strongly encouraged that

citations used in preparing the report are from the primary research literature (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles) rather than secondary sources (e.g., internet websites).

- References should be in the proper AMA format in the body of the paper and in the reference section
- 10+ sources from scientific literature (peer-reviewed journals)
- 10+ sources from the last 8 years
- References are relevant to the topic of the Case Report
- Non-scientific literature sources (i.e. textbooks) are kept to a minimum

The *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals* is the stylistic standard we require for referencing. This *Uniform Requirements* style is based to a large extent on a standard adapted by the National Library of Medicine for its databases. Sample references for citation formats of the most prevalent types of material cited are available at the following source: [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform\\_requirements.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html)

**References should be cited using the American Medical Association (AMA) style numbered consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text.** Use superscript Arabic numerals in serve to identify references in text, tables, and legends. We recommend using a referencing software for e.g. Zotero, Endnote, or Refworks; however the practitioner is still responsible for correct formatting even when using a reference software. All references in the reference section should be cited in the AMA style.

### Overall Paper

Consider the following points as you prepare your case report

- The paper should be clear and understandable
- The “story” or through-line of the case should be apparent
- There should be few if any spelling or grammar mistakes
- Writing should be clear and concise, with smooth transitions
- Extraneous information should not be included, only include relevant information.
- Case should be significant, unique or originate from a question of interest where there is a gap in the literature. Alternatively, clinical findings should be different than what's published or the practitioner explores a known topic from a unique angle, in a new way. It should be apparent that this case report adds new knowledge.

**It is highly suggested that students read the article that the guidelines are based upon to get clear understanding of the case reporting process. The article can be found at:** <http://www.ijtmb.org/index.php/ijtmb/article/view/251/303>

### Case Report Contest Awards

#### Grand Prize “Gold” Award

- \$2,500.00 cash prize for the gold award winner contingent upon the winner undergoing the peer review process for the International Journal of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (IJTMB) or another peer reviewed scholarly journal by the appropriate deadline.\* Winner will receive \$1,000 upon receiving “acceptance with revisions” from the Journal, \$1,500 upon receiving notification of acceptance for publication.
- Up to \$1,000.00 stipend each for the student winner to travel to an upcoming AMTA National Convention and present the findings.
- Invitation to submit a poster for the upcoming AMTA National Convention Poster Session.
- Local and national press releases announcing the award.
- A personal keepsake gold plaques

### **Second Place “Silver” Award**

- \$2,000.00 cash prize for the silver award winner contingent upon the winner undergoing the peer review process for the International Journal of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (IJTMB) or another peer reviewed scholarly journal by the appropriate deadline.\* Winner will receive \$800 upon receiving “acceptance with revisions” from the Journal, \$1,200 upon receiving notification of acceptance for publication.
- Invitation to submit a poster for the AMTA National Convention Poster Session.
- Local and national press releases announcing the award.
- A personal keepsake silver Plaque.

### **Third Place “Bronze” Award**

- \$1,500.00 cash prize for the bronze award winner contingent upon the winner undergoing the peer review process for the International Journal of Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (IJTMB) or another peer reviewed scholarly journal by the appropriate deadline.\* Winner will receive \$600 upon receiving “acceptance with revisions” from the Journal, \$900 upon receiving notification of acceptance for publication.
- Invitation to submit a poster for the AMTA National Convention Poster Session.
- Local and national press releases announcing the award.
- A personal keepsake bronze Plaque.

### **Honorable Mention/s**

- Local and national press releases announcing the award.
- A personal keepsake certificate

**\*Awards will be announce within 120 days from the deadline. Winners will have one calendar year from notification to complete the peer review process with a scholarly journal and redeem their cash prize. Failure to have the Case Report accepted for peer review by a scholarly journal by the deadline will result in forfeiture of the cash prize portion of award.**

***Please note that there is no guarantee that all prizes will be awarded in a given contest year.***

**Case Report Submission Deadline:** June 1. Reports must be submitted to the Massage Therapy Foundation’s website at <http://www.massagetherapyfoundation.org>. The Massage Therapy Foundation is not responsible for any failures of transmission, computer hardware or software, or for any incomplete, lost, late, or damaged submissions.

**Eligibility:** The Massage Therapy Foundation’s Case Report Contest is open to massage therapy students and practitioners who are 18 years of age or older at the time of entry and completed a massage therapy program in the United States or abroad. *Case Reports that have been previously published will not be considered.* Officers, directors, and employees of the Massage Therapy Foundation, its affiliates, agents, and its advertising and promotion agencies, and their respective immediate family members (spouse, children, parents and siblings) and those living in the same household of each (whether or not related), are not eligible to enter. Winners will be notified by email or U.S. mail. If a potential winner does not meet the eligibility requirements, or is otherwise disqualified, then an alternate winner will be selected. Return of any prize notification as non-deliverable will result in disqualification, and an alternate winner being selected.

**Judging Criteria.** Winners will be selected by a panel of independent judges qualified and chosen by the Massage Therapy Foundation in its sole discretion, using the criteria described in

these guidelines. The decision of the judges is final and made at their sole and absolute discretion.

**Representations and Acknowledgements.** By entering the contest, a practitioner represents that the Report is original and does not contain any elements that are not original work. Submission of a Report acknowledges the right of the Massage Therapy Foundation to use the Report for publication and promotion at the Massage Therapy Foundation's sole discretion. Submission of a Report further constitutes permission to use the practitioner's name, likeness, and affiliation for promotional purposes without further compensation. All taxes due on cash awards are the winner's responsibility.

**Disqualification and Termination.** The Massage Therapy Foundation reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to disqualify any entrant and void any entries of an entrant who has engaged in misconduct relative to this contest or otherwise acted in any manner the Massage Therapy Foundation deems to be in violation of the contest rules. If, for any reason, the contest is not capable of running as planned, the Massage Therapy Foundation reserves the right at its sole discretion to cancel, terminate, modify or suspend the contest in whole or in part.

CAUTION: ANY ATTEMPT BY AN ENTRANT OR ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL TO DELIBERATELY DAMAGE ANY WEB SITE OR UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMATE OPERATION OF THE CONTEST IS A VIOLATION OF CRIMINAL AND CIVIL LAWS AND SHOULD SUCH AN ATTEMPT BE MADE, THE MASSAGE THERAPY FOUNDATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SEEK DAMAGES FROM ANY SUCH PERSON TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.

Please direct any questions you may have to:

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