Ethics of Publishing Case Reports: Do We Need Ethics Approval and Patient Consent?

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Abstract
This brief editorial proposes a novel approach to optimizing the editorial procedures for submitting of institutional review board approval and consent forms to journals.

Keywords: Case Report, Publication Ethics, Consent Form, Ethical Approval

Editorial:
For nearly three decades, the ethics of publishing case reports has been a source of contention (1, 2). The central point of the debate has been the requirement to submit a consent form signed by the patient or a proxy (1-4). Even if the case reports are not considered full scale retrospective studies, the second element of ethics of publication report has been the ethical approval or the approval letter signed by the institutional review board. However, providing the journal with written informed consent appears to be ethically appealing. Furthermore, when a patient enters a hospital or clinic, they read and sign a form allowing the institute to use their data anonymously for the advancement of medical science. My recommendation is that any approval letter from the institute/hospital stating that the institutional review board has approved the case reporting and they have received a general signed form from the patient on the date of attendance is sufficient for publishers to ascertain the ethics of publishing case reports.

Conflict of Interest:
There is no conflict of interest to be declared.

References:
2) J Vollmann. ["Informed consent" by the patient for publication of case reports. New guidelines by the "International Committee of Medical Journal Editors" (Vancouver Group)]. Nervenarzt. 1996 May;67(5):422-6. PMID: 9005356