

# A new generation of journals is born

Roland Talanow, MD, PhD

The Cleveland Clinic, Department of Radiology, 9500 Euclid Ave., 44195 Cleveland Ohio (✉ roland@talanow.net)

Radiology Case. 2008 Jul; 2(1):5-7 :: DOI: 10.3941/jrcr.v2i1.26

## ABSTRACT

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has provided new technical and educational opportunities as well as challenges which have not been approached and exploited sufficiently by traditional scientific journals. Furthermore, case reports are usually "neglected" by traditional journals for a variety of reasons, including limited space in the hardcopy version of the journal issue and priority over original research and review articles. The *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* is a new generation of journals, which is dedicated to provide open-access, high-quality, peer-reviewed and interactive Radiology case reports.

### JUST ANOTHER JOURNAL?

Another Radiology journal? Plenty of Radiology journals are available for readers – either as hardcopy or online version. At least 165 medical imaging focused journals are online available to the worldwide audience (ref 1). So why do we need another Radiology journal?

The *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* is a new kind of journals which might play a role model for other journals. It is unique in its kind and represents a new generation of journals, adapted to the new opportunities and challenges of technology and education of the 21st century. But, what does it make so special?

#### Interactivity

First of all, the *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* is the first and only journal so far which allows interactive usage of the published articles to its readers. Interactivity, such as scroll functions through image stacks, interactive annotations and window and level functions are unique and allow a review of the cases as the physician is used to it on diagnostic workstations.

Why are interactive features such as image stack scrolling and windowing important?

Traditionally, case reports provide only selected images, which demonstrate the pathology or pertinent findings. This has not only a limited educational and practical value, because the user only receives selected information and cannot "find out" the answer on his own. But, what is more important is that this kind of provided information does not resemble the "real life" at the radiologist's (or other physician's) workstation. After a diagnostic exam has been opened, the pathology does present immediately on the first image to the examiner. The entire stack of

images needs to be scrolled through and the examiner has to find the pathology himself. Furthermore, scrolling through the stack of images helps to obtain an overview of the entire environment, including the anatomical relationship. To this time, no journal was able to provide such interactive features. The *Journal of Radiology Case Reports*, however, offers as the first journal of its kind such an opportunity. In addition, it also offers to review the articles in several other modes, including reading the manuscript in the traditional, static way, e.g. for print purposes.

#### Dedication to case reports

Another distinguishing feature from other journals is the dedication of this journal to publish Radiology case reports. Case reports are usually "neglected" by traditional journals. Reasons for this include mainly competition with "higher value" articles (review, original research etc.) for valuable space in the hardcopy version of the journal. As a consequence, it becomes increasingly difficult to publish interesting and important findings in a peer reviewed, scientific environment. However, the importance of case reports is widely underestimated, since many studies, reviews and evidence based medicine are based on single or collected case reports in the literature (ref 2, ref 3).

The *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* was born to address these mentioned gaps in the world of scientific literature. It offers not only to publish Radiology case reports, but provides also the opportunity to review these articles in an interactive and thus more practical and educational way.

### Review process

The peer review and editorial process conforms to international standards of peer reviewed scientific journals. Each article will be reviewed by three independent reviewers, who are experienced in the particular specialty. However there are significant differences: The review process is blinded and exceptional by taking usually no more than 7 days. This is also unique when compared to a review period of months (and even years with revisions) in traditional journals. Such a long waiting period can be very frustrating for authors.

### Referencing

Published cases in the *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* are fully citable. Each article receives a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) number (ref 4). In these days, every up-to-date journal assigns its articles a DOI number for easier referencing.

Although the articles are fully referenced/citable immediately after they are published in the *Journal of Radiology Case Reports*, some authors might be also interested to have the published articles indexed in the largest scientific literature database, PubMed/Medline (ref 5, ref 6). Medline/PubMed indexing of the published articles is also in our scope. The *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* is a new journal, thus it first needs to go through a sophisticated review process by a NLM (National Library of Medicine) committee, which decides about indexing of journals into Medline. Medline/PubMed indexing of the articles is in process and is expected to be finalized in the year 2009. After the *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* has been accepted for indexing in Medline, all published articles will be also available in Medline. This includes also articles, which were published in the *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* even before Medline indexing. These articles will be indexed retrospectively.

### Article formats

All articles in the *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* are available in multiple formats (Abstract, HTML, PDF, Interactive case report). This allows to satisfy the individual user's preferences. Interactive case reports can be reviewed to unveil the full educational value of the case report. Static (HTML, PDF) formats allow to print the article and read it in a traditional way as a hardcopy version.

### Eligible manuscript types

The *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* offers the submission of following manuscript types: Case report, Case series, Review article, Original research, Tutorial.

Articles may be submitted under the following sections:

- General Radiology
- Neuroradiology
- Pediatric Radiology
- Musculoskeletal Radiology
- Genitourinary Radiology
- Gastrointestinal Radiology
- Obstetric & Gynecologic Radiology
- Interventional Radiology
- Thoracic Radiology Chest
- Breast Imaging
- Cardiac Imaging
- Emergency Radiology
- Nuclear Medicine / Molecular Imaging
- Protocols & Contrast Media
- Technical/IT & Innovative
- Miscellaneous
- Letter to the Editor / Opinion
- Interesting Image

### Free submission and availability of articles

Another advantageous service provided by the *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* is the free submission and free publication service. Currently, there are only less than a handful online journals available, which are dedicated to the publication of case reports. However, most apply charges for publication of accepted articles. These charges go currently up to US \$745, which limits not only the potential number of article submitters, to these people who can afford such a high fee. This has also as consequence, that potential articles with important findings and information don't have a chance to be published, because the respective authors cannot afford these fees. Furthermore, these fees undermine the scientific legitimacy of these journals and might raise the concern of financial gain. The *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* does not charge the authors at all – neither for article submission nor for publication after acceptance. The journal is sponsored by the non-profit organization EduRad (ref 7) which allows a free submission process and enables also authors with a smaller budget to submit interesting radiological topics.

Furthermore, all articles are available free of charge to the readers after publication. The articles may be read online, printed and distributed, and reproduced in any medium as long as it is conform to the journal policies.

International approach

The *Journal of Radiology Case Reports* has an international approach and accepts publications from a worldwide audience. We understand that English is not the first or even second language for most authors. This should not be a barrier to publish interesting cases. To guarantee, that the articles are understandable for a general international audience, certain standards (set by the journal) have to be maintained. Before publication, one of the reviewing criteria is if the article is written in a well and sound English language. To overcome the problem of publishing sound English articles by non-English proficient authors, the journal offers in cooperation with the non-profit organization EduRad to proof read and correct the submitted articles. The author needs to contact the editor-in-chief for eligibility.

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CONCLUSION

The Journal of Radiology Case Reports is a new generation of innovative journals, which is dedicated to provide open-access, high-quality, peer-reviewed Radiology case reports. Interactivity unveils the full educational potential of the articles and is a unique feature which distinguishes it from all other available peer-reviewed journals. Any potential author worldwide is encouraged to submit interesting Radiology case reports or Radiology teaching related articles. Fast and blinded review of cases allows a fair and unbiased publication of Radiology case reports in a timely manner.

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