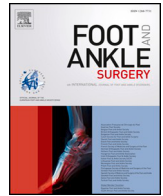


Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Foot and Ankle Surgery

journal homepage: www.journals.elsevier.com/foot-and-ankle-surgery

"Case report" and "Technical tip" article types cancelled and "Letter to the editor" format maintained in Foot and Ankle Surgery

Foot and ankle surgeries are complex interventions, the assessment of which is challenged by factors that depend on surgeon, team, and setting, such as learning curves, quality variations, and perception of equipoise [1]. Reports of new techniques (Technical tips) could be necessary when outcomes are adverse [1]. Case reports are defined as the documentation of a single clinical observation and have a time-honoured and rich tradition in medicine and scientific publication [2]. While there are clear limitations to the methodology of case studies in determination of treatment and establishment of new tests, the observation of a single patient can add to our understanding of aetiology, pathogenesis, natural history, and treatment of particularly rare diseases, and to the training of potential junior investigators [2]. In recent years this class of scientific publication has come under scrutiny and disfavour among some in the medical scientific publication community and case studies are frequently relegated to the lowest rung of the hierarchy of study design [2]. Case series studies should be replaced by prospective development studies for early technical modifications and by prospective research databases for later pre-trial evaluation [1]. Achievement of improved design, conduct, and reporting of surgical research will need concerted action by editors, funders of health care and research, regulatory bodies, and professional societies [1].

Based on the considerations above, the editors decided that Foot and Ankle Surgery will not anymore accept the article types "Case report" and "Technical tips". This decision is based on the questionable scientific value of these articles as discussed above. The journal is focused on publication of evidence-based diagnostics and treatments. The evidence is typically based on (clinical) outcome in a sufficient group of patients for clinical applications or comparison of

different methods or implants in experimental settings. Especially the missing outcome evaluation in a sufficient number of patients limits the scientific value, i.e. evidence of case reports and technical tips.

The editors also decided to keep the "Letter to the editor" and "Response to the letter to the editor" formats to allow for comments and discussion of published articles. Only letters commenting on articles previously published in Foot and Ankle Surgery will be considered. Statements in the letters need to be justified by references. The letter is forwarded to the authors of the article who are encouraged to respond to the letter. Both letters and responses will be published together in one issue.

The editors feel that these decisions emphasize the scientific focus of the journal and maintains the possibility to discuss articles with the authors.

Martinus Richter¹

Department for Foot and Ankle Surgery Nuremberg and Rummelsberg,
Location Hospital Rummelsberg, Rummelsberg 71, Schwarzenbruck
90592, Germany

E-mail address: martinus.richter@sana.de

References

- [1] McCulloch P, Altman DG, Campbell WB, Flum DR, Glasziou P, Marshall JC, et al. No surgical innovation without evaluation: the IDEAL recommendations. *Lancet* 2009;374(9695):1105–12.
- [2] Carey JC. The importance of case reports in advancing scientific knowledge of rare diseases. *Adv Exp Med Biol* 2010;686:77–86.

¹ Homepage: www.krankenhaus-rummelsberg.de (Quick access department: www.foot-surgery.eu)