

# STUDENT CASE REPORT CONTEST

## INTRODUCTION

The Massage Therapy Foundation is delighted to invite you to participate in our Student Case Report Contest. This contest fosters an opportunity for students to develop research skills by conducting their own research case report in which they will summarize their results in the format of a professional research paper. Top-rated reports will receive recognition in the way of publication opportunities and cash rewards. This educational event also provides research acclaim for the host schools.

The mission and goals of the Foundation are as follows:

### MISSION STATEMENT

*The Massage Therapy Foundation advances the knowledge and practice of massage therapy by supporting scientific research, education and community service.*

### GOALS

- *Advance research on therapeutic massage and bodywork*
- *Foster massage therapy initiatives that serve populations in need*
- *Promote research literacy and capacity in the profession*
- *Support the evidence-informed practice of therapeutic massage and bodywork based upon available research, client factors, and practitioner experience and judgment*
- *Fortify the Foundation's financial resources and organizational effectiveness*

## CASE REPORT GUIDELINES

### CASE REPORT STRUCTURE

Students must report on independent clinical interventions on one client with guidance from a Case Report Supervisor and a Clinic Supervisor. This includes doing 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 students' expertise; writing up the results; discussing the implications of the outcomes; and offering suggestions for future study.

### SCHOOL AND SUPERVISOR ROLES

Participating massage therapy programs and their student supervisors play a crucial role in the success of this contest. In order for the student to successfully participate, the school must commit to:

- Provide a supervised clinical component as part of the school's program, in compliance with local jurisdictional requirements.
- Provide a case report supervisor for each student entering the competition; this person may or may not be the student's clinical supervisor.
- Promote the competition within the school.

- Create an in-house process for selecting the best three case reports produced by the school's students. Each school can submit a maximum of three case reports to the Foundation's case report contest review committee. The student authors of the reports must give the school permission to submit their work to the Foundation contest.

Faculty members assisting students participating in the scholarly contest may be involved in one of two roles, or may fulfill both simultaneously:

1. **Clinical Supervisor (CS):** This role involves collaborative management of the case with the student in accordance with generally accepted standards of practice. This function, being a standard component of the student's clinical education, is related yet distinct from the case report contest. If the CS is not performing the role of case report supervisor, he or she must verify to the CRS that the student's report is an accurate reflection of the student's clinical experience with the client.
2. **Case Report Supervisor (CRS):** This role involves acting as a guide and resource as the student researches and writes the case report. Note that the report must be the student's work, and that in providing support and direction the CRS should not unduly influence the work. The CRS must sign off on the final report, attesting to its being the work of the student and an accurate representation of the student's activities in meeting the contest's requirements.

#### Conducting the study

- Students 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.
- Patient confidentiality and the security of health information must be maintained. No personal identification of the student or client may be included in the report.

#### Document Preparation and Submission

- The case report document must be double-spaced, using 12 pt. font size, in Times (or similar) font with 1.5 inch margins on all sides, and written in the English language.
- The document must be 2000-3000 words, excluding the cover page and references.
- Reports must be submitted online through [www.massagetherapyfoundation.org](http://www.massagetherapyfoundation.org).

### **THE CASE REPORT**

A well-written scientific report explains the scientist's goal for doing an experiment, the experimental design and execution, and the meaning of the results. A beautifully conducted study 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.

Please include the following 9 sections in the report.

**1. Cover Page**

Include the title, author's name, contact information, mailing address, email address, and signature.

**2. Acknowledgements**

Please recognize any non-authors who made substantial contribution to the work, including any mentors or contributors. *Please note: the cover page and acknowledgments will be removed from the submitted papers for the process of blind review.*

**3. Abstract/Key Words**

An **abstract** is a condensed version of the paper (200 word limit) and should contain the following sub-sections:

- Background and objectives for the study
- Methods used for any interventions as well as evaluation techniques and measurement tools.
- Results that were obtained
- Conclusion from the study

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 study.

**Key Words** - Citation indexes use key words (or phrases) to help people search for relevant articles. Authors should therefore list 4-5 key words that define their study. These words or phrases should not include words used in the title.

**4. Introduction**

In this section the author should build a case for conducting the study. There should be enough background information on the condition being studied for a reader to understand the topic. Findings of previously published studies must be presented to help explain why the current study is of scientific interest. This is called a literature review. No results or data from the study should be in this section. The last sentence(s) of the Introduction should state the study objective and/or hypothesis: the research question. 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, professional journals, and peer-reviewed journals. Students are expected to utilize reputable biomedical and massage therapy databases as part of their literature search strategy. Use of non-peer reviewed sources should be kept to a minimum.

## 5. Methods

These sections provide all the methodological details necessary for another scientist 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 author, but don't know the specific details of the study. This section should be a narrative of the steps in the study, but not a list of instructions one might find in a cookbook. An important part of writing a scientific paper is deciding which information should be condensed, and what needs to be described in detail.

The **Profile of Client** portion should contain a detailed account of the subject. This may include a presentation of the subject's medical history and diagnosis (including what kind of professional arrived at the diagnosis), prior treatments, findings from a massage assessment, findings from other health care providers, and any contraindications to the use of massage. The client should have a condition that is modifiable by massage. The Student should include a description of the client's desired outcomes.

The **Treatment Plan** portion should describe the massage/bodywork procedures and how subject progress was monitored. The author should provide specific details regarding the massage/bodywork techniques used, including duration of treatment, type of stroke, body regions worked, number of treatments, etc.

A crucial component of the treatment plan is the author'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 (i.e., physical therapy, occupational therapy, etc.) may also be helpful.

Avoid using trademarked names of modalities and traditional French names for strokes; instead, simply provide a description of the work: "longitudinal stroking" is more appropriate than "effleurage", for example.

A description of the plan for assessing progress should also be presented in the Treatment Plan. Any instrument (questionnaire, Visual Analog Scale, ergometer, goniometer, etc.) used to assess progress should be presented and its use described in moderate detail. Also, the frequency of assessment, the number of trials (if appropriate), and the time tested (in relation to treatment) are also important factors. A reader of this section should be able to visualize how subject progress was assessed.

Include a summary of any methodological changes that occur during the course in the Treatment Plan, along with rationalization for such change.

## 6. Results

This section presents the results of the experiment but should not attempt to interpret their meaning. Data should be presented in an organized and easily understandable manner; raw data should not be presented. Authors are encouraged to succinctly present study findings in either a table or graph format. However, data should be presented only once. If a table or figure is presented, it should be titled as such and have a caption (and legend, if necessary) so the reader can quickly understand what is being presented. The written portion of the report must refer to any table or figure, if presented.

## 7. 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 study into the body of literature that currently exists on the topic.

Therefore, this section should:

- Summarize the outcomes and effectiveness of treatment.
- Relate the study findings back to the objective/hypothesis.
- Place the results in context of published findings (using sources previously cited as well as other sources).
- Explain why the obtained results may differ from what other have found.
- Speculate on why the treatment had an effect or not.
- The author should also note problems with the methods, explain any anomalies in the data and suggest future research directions that are based on the results of the study.

## 8. References

While no specific point value is awarded for the References section, the strength of a report is, in part, dependent on the citations referenced.

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). Papers containing non-standard citation styles will not be considered.

### **In-text references:**

Within the manuscript, any reference to others' work must refer the reader to the complete citation that is contained at the end of the manuscript.

### **End of text listing:**

A list of all references cited in the manuscript must be included following the Discussion section and titled "References". *Citations should be listed in accordance with the Uniform Requirements for Articles Submitted to Biomedical Journals referencing system.* References should be typed and in alphabetical order.

Examples:

Journals:

Print: Author(s). Article title. *Journal Name* [using National Library of Medicine abbreviations]. Year;vol(issue No.): inclusive pages.

Online: Author(s). Article title. *Journal Name* [using National Library of Medicine abbreviations]. Year;vol(issue No.): inclusive pages. URL.

Published [date]. Accessed [date].

Books:

Print: Author(s). *Book Title*. Edition number (if it is the second edition or above). City, State (or Country) of publisher: Publisher's name; copyright year.

Online: Author(s). *Book Title*. Edition number (if it is the second edition or above). City, State (or Country) of publisher: Publisher's name; copyright year. URL. Accessed [date].

Website: Author (or, if no author is available, the name of the organization responsible for the site). Title (or, if no title is available, the name of the organization responsible for the site). Name of the Web site. URL. Published [date]. Updated [date]. Accessed [date].

## **SCORING RUBRIC**

Case Report Contest entries are scored according to the following rubric:

### **Concise and Coherent: 6 points**

This addresses basic writing skills, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and the ability to follow the general guidelines regarding length and formatting.

### **Abstract/Key Works: 6 points**

The abstract must be under 200 words, and address background, methods, measuring tools, results and conclusions. Key words must be relevant, and should *not* appear in the title of the Case Report.

### **Research Question: 8 points**

The study objective and hypothesis should be clearly stated in the conclusion of the Introduction section, as a transition to the Methods section. This question must be directly addressed by the methods described.

### **Introduction and Literature Review: 25 points**

This is where the author builds a case for the study, based on what he or she finds in the existing literature. It includes information about the client's condition and information about bodywork modalities or other manual therapy disciplines in the context of that condition. The quality of resources, sophistication of thinking, and rigor of pursuit are all displayed in this section.

### **Profile of client: 10 points**

This section includes the client history, diagnosis, current treatments, and massage assessment. The client's desired outcomes and goals for the massage intervention appear here as well.

**Treatment plan: 15 points**

The rationale and strategy of the treatment plan should be directly linked to the literature review. Descriptions should be clear and reproducible, but not exhaustive. A plan for tracking changes and progress should be included in this section.

**Results: 10 points**

Findings should be reported succinctly, without interpretation. Graphs, charts and tables must have a legend, and must be referred to within the text. Any specific finding should appear only once.

**Discussion: 20 points**

This is a summary and integration of findings with the current body of literature. It should link the outcomes to the goals or research question, note problems with the process, speculate on why the findings worked out this way, and make suggestions for future studies.

## **Student 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.\*
- ◆ Up to \$1,000.00 stipend each for the student winner and the faculty Case Report Supervisor to travel to the 2011 AMTA National Convention and present the findings.
- ◆ Invitation to submit a poster for the 2011 AMTA National Convention Poster Session.
- ◆ Local and national press releases announcing the award.
- ◆ Two personal keepsake gold plaques, one for the winning student and one for the school.

### **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.\*
- ◆ Invitation to submit a poster for the 2011 AMTA National Convention Poster Session.
- ◆ Local and national press releases announcing the award.
- ◆ Two personal keepsake silver plaques, one for the winning student and one for the school.

### **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.\*
- ◆ Invitation to submit a poster for the 2011 AMTA National Convention Poster Session.
- ◆ Local and national press releases announcing the award.
- ◆ Two personal keepsake bronze plaques, one for the winning student and one for the school.

### **Honorable Mention/s**

- ◆ Links to the school website from the Foundation website, if the school has posted the case report.
- ◆ Local and national press releases announcing the award.
- ◆ Two personal keepsake certificates, one for the winning student and one for the school.

\* Awards will be announced by June 2011. Student winners will have until February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 to complete the peer review process with a scholarly journal and redeem their cash prize.

Please direct any questions you may have to:  
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