

## Scientific Editing Report

### *Idiopathic membranous nephropathy in children: A case report and review of the literature*

#### **SUMMARY**

Idiopathic membranous nephropathy (IMN) is a rare disease that can cause nephrotic syndrome (NS) in children and progress to chronic kidney disease. Because IMN has a lower incidence and morbidity rate in children than in adults, data on the diagnosis and treatment of this disease in children are limited. This case report describes a 7-year-old boy with steroid-resistant NS who failed to respond to high-dose methylprednisolone pulse therapy followed by prednisone therapy and was later diagnosed with IMN based on the urinalysis results and presence of autoantibodies against phospholipase A2 receptors (PLA<sub>2</sub>Rs). This manuscript concludes that because no standard treatments for IMN in children are available, individualized treatments should be administered, and PLA<sub>2</sub>R can be used to monitor treatment effect in such patients.

Overall, the paper is well organized and follows a clear structure. In particular, the case report clearly explains the diagnostic procedures and treatment approaches. Nonetheless, we felt that the motivation for reporting this case and the unique aspects of this case could be further emphasized, especially given that similar conclusions about the use of PLA<sub>2</sub>R have been previously reported. To help address this point, we recommend providing additional detail in the Discussion to help readers understand how the current results fit within the context of existing studies and what they add to the field. Relatedly, we have suggested expanding on some of the text in the Discussion to clarify whether the presented information is background information or observations from a literature search. By addressing these points, we think that the manuscript will more clearly convey why this study is needed, what this study achieved, and how the results might be useful.

#### **Guide to the Scientific Edit**

- **Throughout:** Overall, the paper is well written, with a detailed account of the diagnostic and treatment approaches. However, we have suggested moving or consolidating some background information so that the motivation for the case report is more clearly communicated and to provide smoother transitions between similar ideas.
- **Throughout:** There are several instances in the text where a reference is needed. Please ensure that all statements describing previous studies are appropriately supported with references to relevant recent studies.
- **Title:** The Title presents a general overview of the topic. However, in the current version of the manuscript, it is unclear to us whether a literature review was performed. We have suggested either removing this portion of the Title, as the target journal does not require the Discussion to feature a literature review, or editing the Discussion to better reflect the results of the literature review, if one was performed.
- **Abstract:** The Abstract clearly summarizes the case. However, we feel that the motivation for reporting this case could be better highlighted – especially given that the conclusion mentions differentiating IMN from minimal change disease (MCD), which is not mentioned elsewhere in the Abstract. To address this, we have suggested ensuring that all details are included as intended and clarifying how the conclusion is directly drawn from the current case to help the reader understand what can be learned from this case report and which aspects of it are novel.

- **Abstract:** Furthermore, we feel that if the literature review is an important part of this manuscript, then the main recommendations from the existing literature should be highlighted in the Abstract so that readers can better understand what this case report adds to the field.
- **Introduction:** The Introduction presents detailed background information on IMN. However, the relevance of some of the detailed information to the current case is not immediately clear. To improve the narrative flow and emphasize the relevance of the case report, we have recommended elaborating on how the pathological changes and pathogenesis of IMN were used in this case so that readers can better understand how this information can be applied in the future.
- **Introduction:** Similar to the Abstract, at present, the Introduction does not appear to present a clear line of argument for why the current case report needs to be reported, making it difficult to understand which aspects are unique in this case. We have provided suggestions in comments in the manuscript to help clarify this point for the reader.
- **Case Presentation:** The Case Presentation section is detailed and mostly clearly presented. It has a logical flow and seems to present most of the key patient and treatment information. Nonetheless, some relevant additional information may be needed, such as the dates and timing of each examination or procedure, which would clarify the overall timeline of events.
- **Case Presentation:** We have also recommended providing additional details about whether any diagnostic challenges were observed, if other possible diagnoses were considered, and if there were concerns about any possible complications.
- **Figures, tables and legends:** The tables and figure contain detailed data that support the current case report. Nonetheless, we have suggested clarifying the need for the comparison between IMN and MCD in Table 3 in the main text, as well as providing references to support the information shown in the table.
- **Discussion:** The Discussion currently provides additional background information and summarizes the case report again without placing the study findings into context with previous work. We have indicated areas where we think referencing previous studies and comparing their results with yours would help readers understand the novelty and advance of the current findings and why they are important.
- **Discussion:** Similarly, we have provided suggestions to clarify if a literature review was performed and how the findings from the literature could be more clearly presented.
- **Discussion:** The end of the Discussion typically presents a paragraph about the potential limitations of the study. The Discussion provides an opportunity either to explain why you consider these limitations to be significant, or how they might be overcome in future work. We suggest adding such a paragraph to emphasize these aspects of the report for the reader.
- **Conclusion:** The current Conclusion section presents several recommendations and take-away messages. However, we feel that it would be helpful to provide a brief summary of the case at the beginning of this section to help readers easily see how the conclusions were drawn based on the current case and how they logically lead to future directions.

### Possible Journals for Consideration

Below we discuss the suitability of a range of journals. Please bear in mind that we are editorially independent from Springer Nature journals, and we have not consulted with any journal. Our comments represent only opinion, based on our understanding of the current text.

This paper describes a case in which a child with IMN who failed to respond to steroid treatment was successfully treated with tacrolimus and concludes that individualized treatments need to be utilized when treating this disease. Moreover, this paper concludes that PLA<sub>2</sub>R autoantibodies may be used

for both diagnosis and treatment monitoring in IMN. This report seems likely to interest readers who work in nephrology and those who study renal diseases.

We understand that the *World Journal of Clinical Cases* is the target journal for this paper. This journal publishes high-quality clinical and research articles as well as case reports in a wide range of clinical fields. Thus, this manuscript seems to fit within the scope of the journal, and we agree that it seems to be a suitable option for submission.

As alternatives, you may wish to consider the following journals:

- If you wish to target an audience that specializes in nephrology in particular, *Case Reports in Nephrology* or *BMC Nephrology* may be attractive options. Notably, both of these journals have previously published papers on IMN, so the readers of these journals may find your paper of particular interest. Notably, the open-access nature of these journals would allow any interested reader to access the manuscript upon publication, ensuring a wide potential readership.
- To reach a broader audience interested in more generally in case reports, you might consider submitting to *Journal of Medical Case Reports*, *BMJ Case Reports* or *Grand Rounds*. These journals publish original case reports in all medical fields and also use an open-access publication model.

### **GENERAL GUIDANCE ON PAPER STRUCTURE AND CONTENT**

In general, a paper communicates the scientific results in three stages: it establishes a central idea, it provides an argument, and it makes a point. This applies to the paper as a whole: the Introduction explains the background and rationale that leads to an aim, the evidence gathered in investigating this aim is presented in the Results, and the conclusion is established and discussed in the Discussion section. The same approach also applies to individual paragraphs: the sentences and their order should be crafted to establish a narrative with a coherent and logical flow. Ideas should be explicitly connected between sentences and paragraphs, for example by using suitable transitions.

**Title and Abstract:** Most people who encounter your paper will only read the Title, and many will stop at the Abstract. Therefore, to attract the desired target audience to the main paper, these sections should be concise and enticing, yet specific enough to clearly communicate what the paper is about. The Abstract should provide a concise and self-contained description of the most relevant previous understanding, the problem/question to be addressed in the paper, the overall approach and the most important results, the main conclusion, and a broader consideration of what the conclusions tell us or where they lead us next.

**Introduction:** The aim of the introductory paragraphs is to clearly and concisely establish the context of the main theme of the case study, and why it is important or timely – the ‘hook’ that shows the readers why they should care.

**Case presentation:** A case report should describe the presentation of the patient(s), tests and clinical examinations, treatments and outcomes. The figures and tables should be logical, clear and complete (labels, legends, units etc.). Captions should be as self-contained as is reasonable, ideally so that a reader can understand the main message of the figure/table without needing to read the paper in full.

**Discussion:** The Discussion aims to provide a broader consideration of the case, and should ideally present clear outcomes, such as implications of clinical practice that reasonably stem from the case. The Discussion should also highlight any need for additional research to resolve any interesting and unexplained features of the case.

**Concluding paragraphs:** Ideally, the end of the paper should not repeat what has already been said; instead, it should offer something new to the reader, for example explaining how the reported findings fit into the bigger picture (wider applicability, relevance to other fields) and/or what further research might address the unanswered questions or otherwise further our understanding. Optionally, it can be helpful to include your own perspective and interpretations (as long as these passages are labelled as such).