

Gems, stamps and anecdotes – case reports as a valuable source of data in health communication research

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The aim of this poster presentation is to demonstrate the value of the medical case report as a data source informing ESP teaching as well as medical training and professional development. Medical case reports, often referred to as “gems” (Papanas and Lazarides 2008), “stamps” (Jackson 2005) or “anecdotes” (Coccia and Ausman 1987) deal with unknown diseases, their new aspects or anything novel about a specific treatment or drug use, and are published in a number of international professional medical journals, both general as well as solely devoted to this type of publication. For a linguist, however, case reports may provide relevant material to be drawn upon in a variety of medical contexts – medical English language courses, especially in terms of frequently used collocations (Méndez-Cendón 2009; Mungra and Canziani 2013; Salazar et al. 2013; Zabielska 2014), medical training – exemplifying a typical way of reasoning of *working up* a case (Charon 2001; Kenny and Beagan 2004; Garzone 2011), as well as in professional development, through acknowledging the patient’s contribution and emphasising the reflection on the part of the doctor (Davidoff 1997; Hatem and Rider 2004). Thus, the presentation stresses the potential of this relatively devalued medical genre to serve not only pedagogical purposes in medical education but also as a source of language data reflecting discursive practices of doctors and patients (Engelberg 1992; Frederiksen 1999; Wall 2008). These practices involve conveying and discussing medical knowledge as well as mediating and validating patient’s experience (Haidet and Paterniti 2003). The text fragments illustrating the value of case reports as a source of data in the afore-mentioned contexts will be derived from selected case reports of various types from British and American specialist medical journals, which include both conventional and unconventional forms of case reporting, featuring also patients and their families (Smith 2008a, b; Reis et al. 2008; Murawska 2014; Nissen and Wynn 2014).

Word count: 309

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