

SAND abstract No. 102 from the BEACH program 2006–07

Subject: Alzheimer's disease or dementia in patients attending general practice

Organisation supporting this study: Pfizer Australia

Issues: The proportion of general practice patients with diagnosed or suspected Alzheimer's disease or dementia; the proportion of these patients who have had cognitive assessments; the provider who performed these assessments; severity of diagnosed Alzheimer's disease; medications prescribed for diagnosed Alzheimer's disease.

Sample: 2,863 respondents from 99 GPs; data collection period: 15/08/2006–18/09/2006.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2006–07 on this website: <www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm>.

Summary of results

The sex distribution of patients was similar to the distribution for all respondents, with 55.4% of the patients being female. There was a significantly higher proportion of patients aged 75 years or more at these encounters (19.2%, 95% CI: 15.9–22.5) than at overall BEACH encounters in 2004–05 (13.9%, 95% CI: 13.1–14.7), and significantly fewer aged 25–44 years.

At least one of the listed conditions was indicated for 119 patients, with an overall prevalence of 4.2%. Prevalence increased with age from 1.3% among 45–64 year olds to 17.1% in those aged 75 years and over. The prevalence of diagnosed Alzheimer's disease was 1.3%, while suspected Alzheimer's disease had a prevalence of 1.3%, diagnosed dementia 1.1% and suspected dementia 1.4%. One patient had been diagnosed with both Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Of the 37 patients with diagnosed Alzheimer's disease, GPs answered the question on cognitive assessment using the Alzheimer's Disease Assessment Scale Cognitive Test (ADAS-Cog) for 17 patients, of whom six had been assessed, all by specialists. None of the patients with suspected Alzheimer's disease has been assessed using the ADAS-Cog. Information about assessment using the ADAS-Cog for patients with either diagnosed or suspected dementia was provided for 39 of the 67 patients with these conditions. Seven patients had been assessed, four by a specialist, two by a GP and one by another health provider.

Severity of diagnosed Alzheimer's disease was provided for 34 patients. Of these, 38.2% were regarded as having severe Alzheimer's disease, while 41.1% had a moderate level of severity.

Of patients on current medication for Alzheimer's disease ($n = 14$), details were provided for 13 patients. Donepezil hydrochloride was the most common medication, taken by 9 patients, 3 patients were taking galantamine hydrobromide and one patient was taking olanzapine. Of the six patients who had changed medication, reasons for this change were listed for 5 patients. Lack of efficacy was the reason for change for two patients and two patients changed due to side effects.

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PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **PATIENTS WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE OR DEMENTIA**.

You may tear out this page as a guide to completing the following section of forms.

INSTRUCTIONS

Answer the following questions for **ALL** of the **next 30 PATIENTS** in the order in which the patients are seen.

Please **DO NOT** select patients to suit the topic being investigated.

Alzheimer's disease or dementia

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate box/es whether this patient has **diagnosed Alzheimer's disease or dementia, or suspected (i.e. early signs of) Alzheimer's disease or dementia**.

Tick as many as apply.

If the patient does not have diagnosed or suspected Alzheimer's disease or dementia **please end the questions** here.

Medications prescribed for Alzheimer's disease

Please indicate if the patient is currently taking a **prescribed medication for Alzheimer's disease**. Please specify the **name of the current medication**.

If the patient has changed medications or is no longer currently taking a previously prescribed medication **please indicate the name of the previous medication** and the **reason for change or cessation**.

If the patient has never had a medication prescribed for Alzheimer's disease, please tick the box labelled '**no medication ever prescribed**'.

Diagnostic cognitive assessment

Please advise whether the patient has been assessed using the **Alzheimer's Disease Assessment Scale cognitive subscale (ADAS-Cog)**, the **Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE)** and/or **other cognitive assessments**. If yes please indicate:

- **who performed the test** - a GP, specialist or other health provider (tick appropriate box)

For **other cognitive assessments** please indicate the **name of the assessment tool** used.

Future management plan

For patients who **have not had an ADAS-Cog or a MMSE** please select **one option** that best describes your **future management plan** for this patient.

Severity of Alzheimer's disease

For patients with **diagnosed Alzheimer's disease** please advise the **level of severity** of disease for this patient as determined by cognitive assessment and your clinical opinion.

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|---|--|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Does the patient have? <i>(tick all that apply)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Diagnosed Alzheimer's</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Suspected Alzheimer's</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Diagnosed dementia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Suspected dementia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p> <p>↳ End questions</p> | <p>Has the patient had cognitive assessment using:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td> <p>• ADAS-Cog <i>(see definition)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - done by</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Specialist</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> </td> <td> <p>• MMSE <i>(see definition)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - done by</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Specialist</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> </td> <td> <p>• Other cognitive assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - _____ <i>(please specify assessment)</i></p> <p>- done by <input type="checkbox"/> GP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Specialist</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> </td> </tr> </table> | <p>• ADAS-Cog <i>(see definition)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - done by</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Specialist</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> | <p>• MMSE <i>(see definition)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - done by</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Specialist</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> | <p>• Other cognitive assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - _____ <i>(please specify assessment)</i></p> <p>- done by <input type="checkbox"/> GP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Specialist</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p> | <p>Future management plan for patients who have not had an ADAS-Cog or a MMSE is: <i>(tick only one)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Patient is awaiting specialist appt.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Referral to specialist for assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I plan to perform assessment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Currently no plan to assess</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <i>(please specify)</i></p> | <p>For those with diagnosed Alzheimer's disease:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td> <p>• Severity: <i>(see definition)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> mild</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> moderate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> severe</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> unsure</p> </td> <td> <p>• Alzheimer's meds: <i>(please specify)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Current med _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Previous med _____</p> <p>Reason for medication change:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> lack of efficacy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> side effects <i>(please specify)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> other _____ <i>(please specify)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No medication ever prescribed</p> </td> </tr> </table> | <p>• Severity: <i>(see definition)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> mild</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> moderate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> severe</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> unsure</p> | <p>• Alzheimer's meds: <i>(please specify)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Current med _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Previous med _____</p> <p>Reason for medication change:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> lack of efficacy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> side effects <i>(please specify)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> other _____ <i>(please specify)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No medication ever prescribed</p> |
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