

SAND abstract No. 104 from the BEACH program 2006–07

Asthma management and medication use among patients attending general practice

Organisation supporting this study: AstraZeneca Pty Ltd

Issues: The proportion of general practice patients with asthma; frequency of asthma management by a GP; frequency of asthma medication alterations; inhaled corticosteroid (ICS) use by patients with asthma; short acting beta agonist use by patients with asthma.

Sample: 2,862 respondents from 97 GPs; data collection period: 19/09/2006 – 23/10/2006.

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 age and sex distributions of respondents were similar to the distribution for all BEACH (general practice) encounters, with the majority (60.3%) of patients being female.

Of the 2,862 respondents, 442 patients (15.4%; 95% CI: 13.6–17.3) had been diagnosed with asthma. Prevalence was highest among patients aged 15-24 years (22.0%; 95% CI: 16.8–27.1), followed by those aged 5-14 yrs (16.1%, 95% CI: 8.8–23.5), and lowest in patients aged 1-4 years (11.4%; 95% CI: 5.0–17.8). There was no difference in the prevalence of diagnosed asthma among male (15.3%) and female (15.5%) patients.

Of the 442 asthma patients, 421 responded about the number of GP visits in the previous 12 months. In that time, 34 patients (8.1%) had not visited a GP prior to the current visit, 111 (26.4%) had visited 2–4 times, and 71 patients (16.9%) had visited a GP more than 15 times. At these visits, 246 patients had had asthma managed – 102 (24.3%) had asthma managed once, and 95 (22.6%) had asthma managed at 2-3 visits. A further 174 (41.3% of the 421 respondents) had not had asthma managed in the previous 12 months. Of these respondents, 168 provided details of when their asthma was last managed. For 72.6% of these, it had been more than 2 years. Approximately half (48.6%) of the 246 patients with asthma managed in the previous 12 months had not had their asthma medication altered during that time, 33.5% had medication altered once, and 13.9% had medication altered two or three times.

Of the 414 asthma patients who provided responses about asthma medication, 225 (54.3%) used an ICS and 189 (45.7%) did not. More than one third (36.2%) of ICS users took an ICS daily. Details of generic medication were available for 213 patients. Fluticasone/salmeterol in combination was used by 43.7%, budesonide by 19.3%, fluticasone by 16.0% and the budesonide/eformoterol combination was used by 14.1% of patients. The median daily dose reported for the most frequently recorded ICS, fluticasone/salmeterol, was 1,100mcg.

Of the 442 patients who had been diagnosed with asthma, 398 (90.1%) used a short-acting beta agonist (SABA). Of the 246 patients who had had their asthma managed in the previous 12 months, 232 (94.3%) used a SABA. The most common regimen (for 13.8% of these 232) was twice daily, and just over 10% responded that they used a SABA less than once per year. Of the 174 patients who had no asthma management in the previous year, 91.4% used a SABA.

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PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **FREQUENCY OF ASTHMA MANAGEMENT & OF MEDICATION USE.**

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

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask **ALL** of the next **30 PATIENTS** the following questions in the order in which the patients are seen.
Please **DO NOT** select patients to suit the topic being investigated.

Presence of asthma

Has this patient ever been diagnosed with **asthma**?

If **No** you should end the questions here.

If **Yes** please answer the following questions **about the patient's asthma**. You may need to ask the patient or check their notes. If you do not know the exact number please give your **best estimation**.

Previous management

If the patient's asthma was **not managed** in the past 12 months, please advise how long since the **most recent visit** where asthma was managed.

Inhaled Corticosteroid Use

Please advise whether the patient is using an **Inhaled Corticosteroid (ICS)** either as a single or combination product, and if so, **when** the ICS is used i.e. daily, seasonally (during winter or high allergy times), only during periods when asthma worsens. If an ICS is **not** used, please tick the box labelled 'not at all'.

If the patient is using an **Inhaled Corticosteroid (ICS)** please write the **daily regimen** including **name, form, strength, dose and frequency** - for example :-

Name & Form	Strength	Dose	Freq
<i>Fluticasone (inhaler)</i>	<i>250mcg</i>	<i>1 puff</i>	<i>bd</i>

Number of visits to a GP

Please use the tick boxes to indicate the approximate **number of times** the patient has consulted a GP for **ANY reason, including asthma** management, during the past 12 months. **Do not include today's visit** in this estimation.

GP visits for asthma management

Please advise the approximate number of occasions when **asthma** was managed during the past 12 months, either as the **main or secondary reason** for the patient's visit.

Changes to management

Where the patient **has** had their asthma managed during the past 12 months, please advise the approximate **number of occasions** when **either the asthma medication or the dose and/or regimen** were **altered** for any reason?

Short-acting beta agonist use

Please ask the patient approximately **how frequently** they use a **short-acting beta agonist** for their asthma.

<p>Has this patient ever been diagnosed with Asthma?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes →</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>↓</p> <p>End questions</p>	<p>If 'Yes' how many times has the patient visited a GP for any reason in the past 12 months (apart from today)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> none <input type="checkbox"/> 8-10 times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> once only <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 times <input type="checkbox"/> >15 times</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5-7 times</p>	<p>At how many visits was their asthma managed?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> none <input type="checkbox"/> 2 - 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> one only <input type="checkbox"/> 4 - 6</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> > 6</p>	<p>If the patient has NOT had their asthma managed in the past 12 months, approximately how long ago was the asthma last managed?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> < 1.5 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> < 2 yrs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> > 1.5 yrs <input type="checkbox"/> > 2 yrs</p>	<p>How many times has ANY asthma medication and/or dose been altered in the past 12 months?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> never <input type="checkbox"/> 2 - 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> once only <input type="checkbox"/> 4 - 5</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> > 6</p>	<p>When does the patient use an Inhaled corticosteroid?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> not at all <input type="checkbox"/> when asthma worsens</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> daily <input type="checkbox"/> seasonally (e.g winter, high allergy, etc)</p> <p>If used please advise:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Name & Form</th> <th>Strength</th> <th>Dose</th> <th>Freq</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Name & Form	Strength	Dose	Freq	_____	_____	_____	_____	<p>How often does the patient use a short-acting beta agonist?</p> <p>_____ times / day</p> <p>_____ times / week</p> <p>_____ times / month</p> <p>_____ times / year</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> < once / year</p>
Name & Form	Strength	Dose	Freq											
_____	_____	_____	_____											