SAND abstract No. 126 from the BEACH program 2008–09

Subject: Asthma and allergic rhinitis in general practice patients

Organisation supporting this study: Merck, Sharp & Dohme (Australia) Pty Ltd

Issues: Prevalence of asthma in general practice patients; prevalence of allergic rhinitis in general practice patients; prevalence of both asthma and allergic rhinitis in general practice patients; medications taken for asthma management; medications taken for allergic rhinitis management; asthma medications previously used by patients currently taking combination asthma medications.

Sample: 3,003 patients from 102 GPs; data collection period: 01/04/2008—05/05/2008.


Summary of results

The age and sex distributions of surveyed patients were similar to those of patients at all BEACH encounters 2007–08. Of the 3,003 respondents, 689 (22.9%, 95% CI: 20.4–25.5) had asthma and/or allergic rhinitis. The prevalence of asthma was 14.6% (n = 439, 95% CI: 12.7–16.5), and of allergic rhinitis 12.7% (n = 382, 95% CI: 10.6–14.9). Both conditions were present in 4.4% of surveyed patients (n = 132, 95% CI: 3.3–5.5), in 5.2% of those aged 2–14 years, and in 4.5% of those aged 15 years and over.

Information about medications was provided for 428 patients with asthma, with 85.1% taking at least one asthma medication. Nearly half (45.8%) were taking one medication, 33.6% were taking two medications and 5.6% were taking three medications. A total of 556 asthma medications were recorded. The most common medications for asthma were the short-acting beta-2 agonists (SABA) (54.7%), followed by fixed dose combinations of inhaled corticosteroids with long-acting beta-2 agonists (ICS/LABA) (30.6%). The most common generic medication most often was salbutamol (46.9% of all asthma medications), followed by fluticasone/salmeterol (23.0%).

Information about medications used was provided for 376 patients with allergic rhinitis, of whom 71.3% were taking at least one allergic rhinitis medication. Nearly equal proportions were taking nasal corticosteroids (38.0%) and antihistamines (37.2%). There were 163 asthma medications listed for patients with allergic rhinitis—SABA were the most commonly recorded (55.2%), followed by the ICS/LABA combination (31.3%).

Of 152 patients currently taking a combination ICS/LABA, 141 patients (92.8%) had previously taken at least one ‘single’ asthma medication. Nearly half (48.0%) had taken two previous medications.

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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.

Asthma and/or allergic rhinitis
Please advise whether this patient has been diagnosed with **asthma** and/or **allergic rhinitis** (either seasonal or perennial).
If the patient does not have asthma or allergic rhinitis you should **end the questions here**.

Asthma medication
For patients with asthma, please advise the **medications** the patient is **currently taking for asthma**. In the space provided please give the **name and form** and **regimen** of each medication the patient is currently taking.
If the patient is **not currently taking medication** for their asthma please tick the box labelled ‘**No medication for asthma**’.

Asthma medication
For patients with asthma who are **currently** taking a **combination** product of **inhaled corticosteroid (ICS)** and **long acting beta agonist (LABA)** please use the tick boxes to advise which medications the patient was taking **prior to commencement** of the combination product.

Previous asthma medication
For patients with asthma who are **currently** taking a **combination** product of **inhaled corticosteroid (ICS)** and **long acting beta agonist (LABA)** please use the tick boxes to advise which medications the patient was taking **prior to commencement** of the combination product.

Allergic rhinitis medication
For patients with allergic rhinitis, please use the tick boxes to advise the **medications** the patient is **currently taking for their allergic rhinitis**.
If the patient is **not currently taking medication** for their allergic rhinitis please tick the box labelled ‘**No medication for allergic rhinitis**’.

Does this patient have:
- ☐ Asthma
- ☐ Allergic rhinitis
  (seasonal or perennial)
- ☐ None of the above ➔ End questions

Current medication/s for asthma is:
- Name & Form
- Strength
- Dose
- Frequency

Current medication/s for allergic rhinitis is:
- Nasal corticosteroid
- Antihistamine
- Other (please specify)

If the patient is currently taking an ICS / LABA combination product for asthma what medications were they taking prior to its commencement?
- ☐ Short acting beta agonist
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Inhaled corticosteroid
- ☐ Long acting beta agonist
- ☐ No medication
- ☐ Leukotriene receptor antagonist