

SAND abstract No. 14 from the BEACH program 2000–2001

Subject: Co-medications

Organisation supporting this study: GP Statistics and Classification Unit (GPSCU)

Issues: This sub-study investigated the extent to which the medications received at the encounter (prescribed, supplied or advised for over-the-counter purchase), reflect the total medications currently used by the patient. It assessed: the proportion of patients taking medications not received at the encounter ('other medications'); the number and type of other medications; the relationship between encounter medication, other medication and all co-medication; and GP knowledge of patient other medications.

Sample: 12,318 respondents from 211 GPs; data collection period: 28/3/00 – 5/6/00

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method' on this web site (<http://www.fmrc.org.au/beach.htm>).

Summary of results

The age-sex distribution of respondents was similar to the distribution of the total BEACH sample with 58.5% being female. Respondents who had no encounter or other medication made up 17.2% of all respondents. Over two thirds (69.5%) received encounter medication. Almost half (43.4%) indicated they were currently using at least one other medication. One third (30.1%) had encounter medication and were currently using other medication. Females were significantly more likely to be using at least one other medication (47.5%, 95% CI: 43.3—51.6) than were males (37.7%, 95% CI: 33.9—41.6). The likelihood of use of other medication increased with age. The highest prevalence of use was among female patients aged 75 years and over (65.8%). One other medication was being used by 28.9%, 19.2% used two medications, 12.5% three medications, and 22.2% four or more medications.

There were in total 27,764 co-medications (encounter medication plus other medication) recorded, an average of 2.25 per respondent or an average of 3.2 per respondent who was taking at least one medication (n=8,569). Other medications accounted for half (49.4%) of all co-medications. This suggests that data on encounter medications represent half the total medications being used by patients

The difference between the numbers of co-medications and encounter medications ranged from 0.1 medications in male infants to a maximum mean of 3.7 medications in elderly women (75 years +). Encounter medication for male infants far more closely represents their co-medication than that recorded at encounters with elderly women.

The largest proportion of other medications were cardiovascular which accounted for 21.3% of the total, followed by those acting on the central nervous system (13.0%) and those for nutrition and metabolism (10.7%). Other medications accounted for 86.3% of medications for nutrition, 61.4% of urogenital co-medications, 60.1% of anti-neoplastics, 60.0% of contraceptives hormones and 58.3% of cardiovascular medications. In contrast, over 90% of the antibiotics were prescribed at that encounter.

The GP stated they were aware that their patient was using 86.6% of other medications. Awareness was highest for cardiovascular medications (98.2% aware), lowest for vitamins (34.8% aware) and minerals and tonics (67.4% aware).

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PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **PATIENT USE OF CONCURRENT MEDICATIONS**.
You may tear out this page as a guide to completing the following section of forms.

INSTRUCTIONS

ASK THE PATIENT

This question refers to **any** medications **routinely** taken by the patient that have **not** already been recorded on this encounter form. These may include prescribed medications, over-the-counter preparations which were advised by the doctor, or patient-initiated over-the-counter preparations.

For example, if the patient is currently undertaking a course of monthly injections, uses a bronchodilator when required, or routinely uses any other form of medication, the patient should answer '**YES**'.

If **NO** - questions **END** here.

ASK THE PATIENT

Please list these medications in the numbered spaces provided. List up to 6 medications. If there are more than 6, please indicate how many more by writing a number in the space provided e.g.,

2

FOR THE DOCTOR

For each medication listed by the patient please indicate whether or not you were aware of the patient's usage of this medication by circling 'Yes' or 'No'.

Ask the patient- Are you currently taking any medications other than those prescribed/advised by your doctor today ? YES/NO	If Yes, please name these medications:	For GP - aware of patient's use of this medication?	If Yes, please name these medications:	For GP - aware of patient's use of this medication?
	1. _____	Yes / No	4. _____	Yes / No
	2. _____	Yes / No	5. _____	Yes / No
	3. _____	Yes / No	6. _____	Yes / No
			If more than 6, how many more? _____	