

SAND abstract No. 156 from the BEACH program 2009–10

Subject: Osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and ankylosing spondylitis and acid suppressants use

Organisation supporting this study: AstraZeneca Pty Ltd (Australia)

Issues: The proportion of general practice patients with diagnosed osteoarthritis (OA), rheumatoid arthritis (RA) or ankylosing spondylitis (AS); the medications currently taken for management of OA/RA/AS; the reasons for the most recent change in medication regimen for OA/RA/AS; the proportion of patients with OA/RA/AS taking acid suppressants; the reasons for acid suppressant use related to medications taken for OA/RA/AS.

Sample: 2,919 patients from 97 GPs; data collection period: 27/10/2009 – 30/11/2009.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled *SAND method 2009–10* at: www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm.

Summary of results

The age-sex distribution of respondents did not differ from the distribution for all 2008–09 BEACH encounters. Of the 2,895 respondents, 755 (26.1%, 95% CI: 23.5–28.7) had OA, 33 (1.1%, 95% CI: 0.7–1.6) had RA, and 3 patients (0.1%, 95% CI: 0.0–0.2) had AS. In total, 786 patients (27.2%, 95% CI: 24.5–29.8) had at least one of these conditions. The prevalence of at least one condition rose significantly as age of patient increased, from 28.7% (95% CI: 25.3–32.2) in patients aged 25–44 years to 66.1% (95% CI: 60.5–71.8) in patients aged 75 years and over. There was no sex-specific difference in prevalence of OA/RA/AS.

Of 740 respondents with osteoarthritis, only 550 (74.3%) were currently taking medication. There were 718 medications recorded, of which 48.3% were over-the-counter (OTC) analgesics, 18.9% were 'other medications', and 16.9% were coxibs or meloxicam. The OTC analgesic paracetamol accounted for 47.9% of medications for osteoarthritis. (Refer to Box 1 for medication groups.)

Of 27 respondents with rheumatoid arthritis only, 24 (88.9%) were currently taking medication. There were 51 medications recorded, of which 38 (74.5%) were in the 'other medication' group, most commonly methotrexate (25.5%). There were five medications (9.8%) in the coxibs and meloxicam group.

Of the 580 patients currently taking medication for OA/RA/AS, information on the reason for most recent change of medication or regimen was available for 482. Lack of efficacy was the most common reason given, cited by 7.7% of patients. Fear of side effects was the reason given by 2.9% of patients, cost of medication was recorded for 2.3%, patient's request for 1.5%, and side effect for 0.8%. No change was recorded for 412 patients (85.5%).

Of 726 respondents, 266 patients (36.6%) were currently taking acid suppressants. Of the 261 acid suppressants recorded, esomeprazole ($n=80$, 30.7%) was most commonly taken, followed by pantoprazole ($n=65$, 24.9%) and omeprazole ($n=49$, 18.8%). Of 264 respondents, 113 (42.8%) indicated that their acid suppressant use was related to their use of OA/RA/AS medication. Reasons for acid suppressant use were: treatment of gastrointestinal symptoms ($n=73$, 64.6%), prevention of gastrointestinal symptoms ($n=29$, 25.7%), treatment of ulcer or bleed ($n=8$, 7.1%), and prevention of ulcer or bleed ($n=6$, 5.3%).

Correspondence to: Ying Pan, AGPSCC

Box 1: Medication groups and Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical (ATC) codes

Medication group	ATC code	ATC label for the specified ATC code	
Non-selective non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (NSAID) drugs	All M01A	Anti-inflammatory and antirheumatic products, non-steroids	
	excluding (M01AH, M01AX05, M01AC06)	excluding (coxibs, glucosamine, meloxicam)	
Coxibs and meloxicam	M01AH	Coxibs	
	M01AC06	Meloxicam	
OTC analgesic	N02B	other analgesics and antipyretics	
	B01AC06	acetylsalicylic acid	
Other medication	M01BA	Anti-inflammatory/antirheumatic agents combined with corticosteroids	
	M01C	Specific antirheumatic agents	
	M02	Topical products for joint and muscular pain	
	M05B	Drugs affecting bone structure and mineralisation	
	A07E	Intestinal anti-inflammatory agents	
	H02A	Corticosteroids for systemic use, plain	
	L01B	Antimetabolites	
	L04A	Immunosuppressants	
	N02A	Opioids	
	N06A	Antidepressants	
	P01BA02	Hydroxychloroquine	
	Complementary therapy	M01AX05	Glucosamine
		M01BX	Other anti-inflammatory/antirheumatic agents combined with corticosteroids—for example, glucosamine+chondroitin
V03		All other therapeutic products	
V06D		Other nutrients	
A12A		Calcium	
B03B		Vitamin B12 and folic acid	
A09A		Digestives, including enzymes	

Source: World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Drug Statistics Methodology 2009. Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical (ATC) classification index with Defined Daily Doses (DDDs). January 2009 ed. Oslo: WHO.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **ARTHRITIS, ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS AND ACID SUPPRESSION.**
 You may tear out this page as a guide to completing the following section of forms.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please 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.

Arthritis and/or ankylosing spondylitis

Please use the tick boxes to advise whether this patient has **osteoarthritis (OA)**, **rheumatoid arthritis (RA)** and/or **ankylosing spondylitis (AS)**.

If the patient does **not** have one of these three conditions please **end the questions here for this patient.**

Medication / regimen change

If the **medication or regimen** of the osteoarthritis/rheumatoid arthritis/ankylosing spondylitis medication(s) **has changed**, please use the tick boxes to indicate the **reason(s) for the most recent change.**

Tick as many as apply.

Related medication use

If the patient's **acid suppressant** use is **related to the OA/RA/AS medication(s)**, please use the tick boxes to **indicate the reason.**

Current medication

In the space provided please write the **name and form** of the **medication(s) currently** taken by the patient for management of osteoarthritis (OA), rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and/or ankylosing spondylitis (AS).

Please indicate the regimen (i.e. **strength, dose and frequency**) of the medication(s).

Please **include all types of medications** taken including over-the-counter medications.

Acid suppressant medication

Please ask the patient whether they **currently take acid suppressant medication.** If 'yes' please write the **name, form and regimen (dose and frequency)** of the acid suppressant medication(s) **currently used.**

Please include **all types of acid suppressant medications** including over-the-counter medications.

Does this patient have:

- Osteoarthritis (OA)
- Rheumatoid arthritis (RA)
- Ankylosing spondylitis (AS)
- None of the above

End questions ←

Current medication/s for OA, RA, AS:

Name & Form **Strength** **Dose** **Frequency**

NO MEDICATION

If the medication/regimen has changed what was the reason(s) for the most recent change?

- Lack of efficacy
- Patient request
- Side effect(s): _____
- Fear of side effect(s): _____
- Other: _____

- Cost
- No change

(please specify)

Is this patient taking an acid suppressant medication?

- Yes (please specify)

Name & Form **Strength** **Dose** **Frequency**

No

If 'yes' is acid suppressant use related to OA, RA or AS medication(s)?

- Yes - treatment of GI symptoms
- Yes - prevention of GI symptoms
- Yes - treatment of ulcer or bleed
- Yes - prevention of ulcer or bleed
- No