

SAND abstract No. 159 from the BEACH program 2009–10

Subject: Dementia screening, prevalence and management

Organisation supporting this study: Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd

Issues: The proportion of general practice patients who have been screened for dementia; reason(s) for screening; test(s) used for screening; proportion of screened patients diagnosed with dementia; management of patients with dementia; dementia risk factors present in patients who had not been screened; proportion of unscreened patients with whom GPs had discussed dementia risk.

Sample: 2,690 patients from 91 GPs; data collection period: 19/01/2010 – 22/02/2010.

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

Summary of results

The age distribution of respondents was significantly different from patients at all 2008–09 BEACH encounters, with a higher proportion of patients aged 25–44 years. The sex distribution was similar to that of all patients at 2008–09 BEACH encounters.

Of the 2,690 respondents, 226 (8.4%, 95% CI: 6.0–10.8) had been screened for dementia at some time. The percentage of patients screened rose significantly with age to reach 44.1% among patients aged 75 years and over. There was no significant difference between males and females in the proportion of patients screened.

Among the 214 screened patients for whom screening reasons were recorded, ‘concern of the GP’ was a reason for screening 35.5%, dementia signs and symptoms were cited as a reason for 30.8%, ‘family concerns’ for 20.1%, family history of dementia for 10.3%, and concern of other health professional for 8.4%. Other reasons for dementia screening were reported for over one-third (34.1%) of these patients. Health assessment accounted for 49.3%, and age of patient accounted for 14.1% of the other reasons specified.

The MMSE (mini mental state exam) was used for 90.7% of the 226 screened patients, and GP-COG (GP assessment of cognition) for 10.2% of patients. The other listed tests were not often used.

Dementia diagnosis status was recorded for 221 of the 226 screened patients. A total of 54 patients (24.4%) were diagnosed with dementia. Of those patients with dementia, 72.2% received a referral, 42.6% were being monitored (no treatment), 29.6% received medication, and for 24.1%, another action was recorded – for example, residential care.

Of the 2,464 patients who had not been screened for dementia, 2,403 gave details of risk factors. Three out of five patients (60.9%) had no risk factors, while 23.4% had one risk factor, 10.7% had two, and 5.0% had three or more. The most common risk factor was cardiovascular disease (14.9% of patients), followed by dyslipidaemia (14.7%), being a smoker (12.7%), diabetes (7.6%), and family history of dementia (7.5%).

GPs were asked if they had ever discussed dementia risk factors with the patient. Of 2,383 respondents who had never been screened, GPs had discussed dementia risk factors with 11.1% of them. They had discussed dementia risk with 21.8% of the 923 unscreened respondents with at least one risk factor.

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PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **DEMENTIA SCREENING**.
 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.

Dementia screening

Please indicate whether this patient has **ever been screened for dementia**.

If **'yes'** please answer the questions in **PART 1**.

If **'no'** please go to **PART 2** of the form.

PART 1 — Patients who HAVE been screened

Reason for screening

Please use the tick boxes to indicate **the reason(s)** that this patient was **screened for dementia**.

Please tick all that apply

Screening test

Please use the tick boxes to indicate the **screening tests(s)** that were performed.

Please tick all that apply

Diagnosed dementia

Please indicate whether this patient has been **diagnosed with dementia**.

If **'Yes'** please indicate **what actions were taken** to manage the dementia.
 Please tick all that apply.

PART 2 — Patients who have NOT been screened

Risk factors for dementia

Please use the tick boxes to indicate whether this patient has any of the listed **risk factors for dementia**.

Tick all that apply.

Dementia risk

Please indicate whether you have **ever discussed the risk of dementia with this patient**.

<p>Has this patient been screened for dementia?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes - go to PART 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No - go to PART 2</p>	<p>PART 1: Dementia screening</p> <p>What were the reason(s) for screening this patient? <i>(Tick all that apply)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family Hx of dementia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Signs and symptoms</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family concerns</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify):</i> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Concern of GP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Concern of other health professional</p>	<p>What screening test/s was/were performed?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> MMSE <i>(Mini mental state exam)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GP-COG <i>(GP assessment of cognition)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mini-Cog <i>(a 3 minute cognitive test)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> RUDAS <i>(Rowland Universal Dementia Assessment Scale)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Genetic testing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify):</i> _____</p>	<p>Has this patient been diagnosed with dementia?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If 'yes' what actions were taken?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Referral</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medication</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring (no treatment)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify)</i> _____</p>	<p>PART 2: NO screening</p> <p>Does this patient have any of the listed risk factors for dementia? <i>(Tick all that apply)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Family Hx of dementia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Cardiovascular dis.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Smoker</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Dyslipidaemia</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High homocysteine levels</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Previous head injury</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>	<p>Have you discussed dementia risk with this patient?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
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