

SAND abstract No. 170 from the BEACH program 2010–11

Subject: Use of SSRIs and/or SNRIs in general practice patients

Organisation supporting this study: Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd

Issues: Proportion of general practice patients taking selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and/or selective noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs); current prescribed regimens of these medications; conditions being managed with SSRIs/SNRIs; factors contributing to initiation of SSRIs/SNRIs; severity of depression and prevalence of recurrent depression in patients taking SSRIs/SNRIs.

Sample: 2,847 patients from 100 GPs; data collection period: 17/08/2010 – 20/09/2010

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled *SAND method 2010–11* at:

<http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/fmrc/publications/sand-abstracts>. Severity of depression scale was that used by Ellis & Smith (2002). *Treating depression: the beyondblue guidelines for treating depression in primary care*. MJA 176(10 Suppl):S77–S83. Levels defined as: Mild = mild depression without complications; Moderate I = moderate depression (including with co-morbid anxiety) and dysthymia; Moderate II = moderate depression with comorbid substance misuse; Severe I = severe depression with melancholia; Severe II = psychotic depression, severe depression with risk of suicide, and atypical depression.

Summary of results

The age and sex distribution of patients was not significantly different from that of patients at all BEACH encounters in 2009–10.

Of the 2,847 respondents, 227 patients (8.0%) were currently taking an SSRI, 93 (3.3%) were currently taking a SNRI and one patient was taking both. In total, 11.3% were taking at least one of these medications. Sex specific rates showed a significantly higher proportion of females (13.0%, 95% CI: 11.1–14.8) taking SSRIs/SNRIs than males (8.9%, 95% CI: 7.0–11.0). There were only 2 patients aged < 15 years taking these medications but there were no significant differences in other patient age groups.

Of 328 medications recorded for 320 respondents, the most commonly recorded was sertraline (22.6%), followed by venlafaxine (17.4%). Of 319 respondents, 273 (85.6%) had been prescribed the SSRI/SNRI for depression; 82 (25.7%) were prescribed the SSRI/SNRI for anxiety, and 11 patients (3.5%) for bipolar disorder. For 18 patients, other conditions were listed as the reason for the prescription, most commonly obsessive-compulsive disorder.

There were 310 respondents who described factors contributing to initiation of SSRI /SNRI: GP preference was reported for 47.7%; guideline recommendation for 20.3%; non-response to previous medication was reported for 14.2%; patient preference for 7.4%; side-effect of previous medication for 7.4%; to avoid potential side-effects for 6.5%; and interaction with previous medication had been the reason for initiation for 4 patients (1.3%).

Of the 273 patients who reported having the SSRI/SNRI prescribed for depression, 263 responded to the question on severity of depression. The majority (44.1%) had Moderate I level; 25.1% had Moderate II level; 13.3% had Mild depression; 12.6% had Severe I level; and 4.9% had Severe II level depression.

Of the 273 patients who reported having the SSRI/SNRI prescribed for depression, 225 responded to the question on recurrent depression. Of these, 69.8% had recurrent depression, 20.4% did not have recurrent depression, and 9.8% did not know.

Correspondence to: Christopher Harrison, FMRC

Family Medicine Research Centre, University of Sydney. SAND abstract No. 170 from the BEACH program: Use of SSRIs and/or SNRIs in general practice patients. Sydney: FMRC University of Sydney, 2011. ISSN 1444-9072

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **USE OF SSRI AND SNRI MEDICATION.**

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.

SSRI and SNRI use

Please use the tick boxes to indicate whether this patient is **currently** taking a **SSRI** (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) or a **SNRI** (serotonin noradrenaline reuptake inhibitor).

If this patient is **not** taking either a SSRI or SNRI please **end the questions here** for this patient.

SSRI/SNRI regimen

For patients that are currently taking a SSRI or SNRI please write the **name, form** and regimen (i.e. **strength, dose and frequency**) of the SSRI/SNRI medication.

SSRI/SNRI indication

Please use the tick boxes to specify the **condition** the SSRI or SNRI was prescribed to manage. If the condition is not listed please tick the box labelled other and write the condition in the space provided.

Severity of depression

Please use the tick boxes to indicate the severity** of the patient's depression.

- Mild Mild depression without complications
- Moderate I Moderate depression (including with comorbid anxiety) and dysthymia
- Moderate II Moderate depression with comorbid substance misuse
- Severe I Severe depression with melancholia
- Severe II Psychotic depression, severe depression with risk of suicide, and atypical depression

** Source: Ellis PM and Smith DAR. Treating depression: the beyondblue guidelines for treating depression in primary care. MJA 2002; 176(10 Suppl):S77-S83.

Factors contributing to SSRI/SNRI initiation

Please use the tick boxes to indicate **why** the current **SSRI or SNRI was initiated** for this patient. Tick all that apply.

Recurrent depression

Please use the tick boxes to indicate whether this patient has recurrent depression.

<p>Is this patient currently taking:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> SNRI (serotonin noradrenaline reuptake inhibitor)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Neither of the above</p> <p>End questions ←</p>	<p>If taking a SSRI / SNRI please specify:</p> <p>1. Medication regimen:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Name & Form</th> <th>Strength</th> <th>Dose</th> <th>Frequency</th> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>	Name & Form	Strength	Dose	Frequency													<p>2. SSRI / SNRI was prescribed for:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Depression</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety disorder</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bipolar disorder</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other problem: _____</p> <p>(please specify)</p>	<p>What factor(s) contributed to the decision to initiate the current SSRI or SNRI for this patient?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Guideline recommend'n</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Patient preference</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> GP preference</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Avoid potential side effects/interactions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Interaction with previous medication</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Side effect(s) of previous medication</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Patient did not respond to previous medication</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: (please specify) _____</p>	<p>For patients with depression:</p> <p>Severity is: (see green sheet for definition)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mild</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Moderate I</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Moderate II</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Severe I</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Severe II</p> <p>Does this patient have recurrent depression?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>
Name & Form	Strength	Dose	Frequency																	