

SAND abstract No. 25 from the BEACH program 2001–02

Subject: Prevalence of diabetes, medications and control

Organisation supporting this study: Aventis Pharma Pty. Ltd.

Issues: The prevalence of diagnosed diabetes and the specific medications used in its treatment; hypoglycaemic attacks in diabetic patients including the number of attacks, action taken because of the attacks and the number of days off work due to the attacks over the past twelve months.

Sample: 2,810 encounters from 95 GPs; data collection period: 01/05/2001–11/06/2001.

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

Summary of results

The age-sex distribution of respondents was similar to the distribution for all BEACH encounters, with the majority (56.7%) being female. Patients aged 25–44 years accounted for 28.1% of the sample.

The prevalence of diagnosed Type 1 diabetes in this sample was estimated to be 0.8% (95% CI: 0.0–2.7), and the prevalence of diagnosed Type 2 diabetes was 6.0% (95% CI: 4.6–7.3). On average, patients with diagnosed diabetes were older (66.5 years, 95% CI: 63.6–69.4) than patients without diabetes (42.4 years, 95% CI: 40.2–44.6).

All patients with Type 1 diabetes were currently using insulin, with the majority (54.6%) taking intermediate/long acting insulin only. Only 7.9% of patients with Type 2 diabetes were currently using insulin. Non-insulin diabetic medication (defined as sulfonylurea, metformin, glitazone or repaglinide) was being taken by 71.3% (95% CI: 63.7–79.0) of patients with Type 2 diabetes. Of these medications, metformin (50.6%) and sulfonylurea (41.5%) were the most commonly prescribed for patients with Type 2 diabetes. Almost a third (31.8%) of patients with Type 1 diabetes and almost half (43.3%) of those with Type 2 diabetes were also taking anti-hypertensive medication.

The proportion of patients with diabetes who indicated having any hypoglycaemic attacks in the previous 12 months was 11.0% (n=20), 13 (65.0%) of these reporting between one and three hypoglycaemic attacks in the previous 12 months.

Of the 20 patients who had hypoglycaemic attack/s during the previous 12 months, 17 provided information on where they sought treatment. Eight visited their GP as a result of an attack, three visited a community nurse, three attended casualty, three were hospitalised and none had a glucagon injection. Only one of the six working age patients with diabetes who had hypoglycaemic attack/s in the previous 12 months had any time off work as a result.

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