

## **SAND abstract No. 28 from the BEACH program 2001-2002**

### **Subject: Prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and dementia**

**Organisation supporting this study:** Janssen-Cilag Pty Ltd

**Issues:** Prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and dementia in adult general practice patients; prevalence of current cognitive impairment, difficulties with daily living or behaviour changes in patients not diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or dementia; proportion of patients who (in the GP's opinion) were likely to have dementia or the early signs of Alzheimer's; proportion of patients who had taken a Mini Mental Health Assessment (MMHA).

**Sample:** 2,194 encounters (with adults) from 88 GPs; data collection period: 17/07/2001–20/08/2001.

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

#### **Summary of results:**

The age and sex distributions of the respondents was similar to the distribution for BEACH overall. The prevalence of diagnosed Alzheimer's disease in this adult general practice patient population was 1.6% (95% CI: 0.0–4.4), and the prevalence of diagnosed dementia was 2.4% (95% CI: 0.0–5.4).

Of adult patients not diagnosed with dementia, 4.2% displayed cognitive impairment, 4.9% encountered difficulties with daily living and 5.6% experienced behavioural changes. Only 1.4% of patients displayed all three of the above symptoms, while 2.7% had 2 of the 3 symptoms, and 5.0% displayed one symptom.

A MMHA had been used for only 2.4% of the 2,046 patients without diagnosed dementia or Alzheimer's for whom a response to this question was provided. MMHA use was rare (0.9% assessed) for patients with no symptoms of dementia but more common (51.7% assessed) with patients who had all three dementia symptoms.

GPs were asked whether it was likely that patients without diagnosed dementia actually had signs of dementia or early Alzheimer's. GPs indicated that 59 patients (2.9%) were likely to have dementia not yet diagnosed, and 20 patients (1.0%) were likely to have early Alzheimer's, as yet not diagnosed. Combined, GPs indicated that 63 patients (3.1%) were likely to have undiagnosed dementia and/or early Alzheimer's and more than half of these patients were aged 75 years or more. By far the majority of these expressed opinions were based on clinical opinion rather than on results of a MMHA.

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