

SAND abstract No. 29 from the BEACH program 2001–02

Subject: Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and acid suppressant use

Organisation supporting this study: AstraZeneca (Australia)

Issues: This sub-study was designed to investigate non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and acid suppressant use by general practice patients. Specifically, the use of NSAIDs, Cox-2 inhibitors and acid suppressants by patients with upper gastro-intestinal (UGI) problems was explored.

Sample: Responses were recorded by 88 GPs for 2,551 patients; data collection period: 16/07/2001–20/08/2001.

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

Summary of results

The age-sex distribution of patients in this sample was similar to the distribution of the total BEACH sample, with the majority (58.8%) being female. Patients aged between 25 and 64 years represented over half the sample (53.2%).

One in seven (13.9%) of the 2,551 respondents were currently taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). Of those who reported NSAID use, 46.6% (n=165) were using a Cox-2 inhibitor alone; 38.7% (n=137) were using another NSAID alone; 5.1% were using aspirin alone; 1.1% were using both a Cox-2 and aspirin; and 0.9% were using aspirin with another NSAID.

Among the 325 patients for whom the type of NSAID was specified, Cox-2 inhibitors were the most commonly used (59.4%). Regimen was recorded for 132 of those using Cox-2 inhibitors, 59.1% of whom listed continual use and the remainder (40.9%) were taking them when required.

A total of 422 respondents using NSAIDs answered the UGI questions. The prevalence of UGI in these patients was estimated at 75.4% (CI:69.7–81.0). At least one UGI problem was listed by 38.8% of the 165 patients using Cox-2 inhibitors; 25.4% of the 138 other NSAID users, and 32.3% of the 130 taking low dose aspirin.

Of the 422 respondents with at least one UGI problem, three quarters (75.4%) were using acid suppressant medication. For the 480 patients currently taking NSAID and/or aspirin, almost one in three (30.2%) were using acid suppressant medications.

Acid suppressants were used prophylactically by 39.1% of the 307 patients using acid suppressants, the remainder using these medications only when required for symptom relief.

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