

SAND abstract No. 45 from the BEACH program 2002–03

Subject: Diabetes mellitus prevalence, management and risk factors

Organisation supporting this study: AstraZeneca Pty Ltd

Issues: Prevalence and treatment of types 1 and 2 diabetes mellitus in general practice patients; cholesterol levels in patients with diabetes; occurrence of risk factors in patients without diabetes.

Sample: 3,165 encounters from 108 GPs; data collection period: 20/08/2002–23/09/2002.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method: 2002-03' on the FMRC website (http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm).

Summary of results

The age-sex distribution of respondents was similar to the distribution for all BEACH (general practice) encounters, with the majority (58.2%) being female, and a quarter of patients aged over 65 years.

The prevalence of type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus was 1.0% (95% CI: 0.5-1.3, n=30) and 7.2% (95% CI: 5.9-8.5, n=226) respectively with similar rates for male and female patients. Diabetes was most common in patients aged 65 to 74 years at 2.3% for type 1 and 18.4% for type 2.

The most common treatment regimen for type 1 diabetes patients was insulin, either alone or in combination with a diet and exercise program (41.4%). For type 2 diabetes patients, diet and exercise alone was the most frequent treatment (33.3%), followed by an oral anti-diabetic agent (most commonly a biguanide) either alone or in combination with diet and exercise (32.0%).

Among the 25 type 1 diabetes patients, for whom the GPs recorded data on recent cholesterol test results, 56.0% were in the normal range and 32.0% had mixed dyslipidaemia. Recent test results for 38.0% of the 208 type 2 diabetes patients were in the normal range. Fifty-seven percent of patients had results outside the normal range, most commonly predominant high LDL and/or total cholesterol, while almost 5.0% of patients had never been tested.

Risk factor status was recorded for 2,907 patients without diabetes. Seventy-one percent of patients had no risk factors, 17.1% had hypertension, 14.1% central obesity, 7.7% dyslipidaemia and 2.0% had abnormal glucose. The highest prevalence of abnormal glucose and dyslipidaemia was in 65 to 74 year olds, while hypertension and central obesity were most prevalent in patients 75 years or older.

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