

## **SAND abstract No. 46 from the BEACH program 2002–03**

### **Subject: Coronary heart disease, risk factors and lipid lowering medication**

**Organisation supporting this study:** Merck Sharp & Dohme (Australia) Pty Ltd

**Issues:** The prevalence of coronary heart disease (CHD) and risk factors for CHD among general practice patients; the proportion of patients who had had a cholesterol test; the proportion of patients on lipid lowering medication; the medications being taken and the cholesterol levels at commencement of therapy.

**Sample:** 3,151 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](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 encounters, with over half aged 25 to 64 years and the majority (59.5%) being female.

Sixty-seven percent of patients did not have coronary heart disease nor any of six listed risk factors (95% CI: 63.4-69.7). A total of 224 respondents (7.2%) had existing CHD. Of patients without CHD but with risk factors for CHD, 17.7% had hypertension, 7.0% family history of CHD, 5.7% family history of hypercholesterolaemia and 3.8% had diabetes. The risk factors for cerebrovascular disease and peripheral vascular disease accounted for 1.9% and 0.9% respectively.

As expected, CHD or its risk factors were more prevalent in older patients, with a significant increase between 45–64 year olds (43.3% 95% CI: 39.3–47.3) and 65–74 year olds (66.2% 95% CI: 60.3–72.1). The prevalence for patients over 75 years was 73.4% (95% CI: 68.3–78.6). Risk factors were evenly spread between male and female patients. CHD was marginally more common among males (9.1%, 95% CI: 7.0–11.1) than females (5.8%, 95% CI: 4.2–7.4) though the difference did not reach statistical significance.

Of the 3,098 patients who answered the question on cholesterol testing, more than half (52.9%) had previously had a cholesterol test, and of the 2,726 respondents to the question on lipid lowering medication status, 12.7% were either starting or continuing such medication.

The most popular lipid lowering generic medications were Simvastatin, which accounted for 41.8% of lipid lowering medications and Atorvastatin (40.9% of medications). For those on lipid lowering medications the average total cholesterol at the commencement of therapy was 6.9mm/L, the mean level of triglycerides was 2.7mm/L and HDL 1.5 mm/L.

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