

SAND abstract No. 51 from the BEACH program 2002–03

Subject: Use of proton pump inhibitors for gastrointestinal problems

Organisation supporting this study: Janssen-Cilag Pty Ltd

Issues: Proton pump inhibitors (PPI) are frequently used in the management of gastrointestinal (GI) disease. This study measured the number of patients on PPIs for GI problems (as defined by the GP), the numbers prescribed for new GI problems, the types of PPIs prescribed currently or in the past, whether initiated by GPs or specialists and if supplied as samples.

Sample: 2,648 encounters from 91 GPs; data collection period: 03/12/2002–20/01/2003.

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 expected distribution for general practice encounters, with the majority (58.4%) of patients being female.

Of the 2,648 respondents, the GP indicated that 10.4% (95%CI: 8.6-12.2)(n=275) of patients were currently taking a PPI for a GI problem. These patients were significantly older (mean age 63.3 years) than patients not taking PPIs (mean age 46.8 years). There was no difference in gender of patients taking PPIs (42.1% male) compared to those who were not (41.6% male).

Of the 275 patients currently on a PPI for gastrointestinal problem/s, 9.1% (95%CI: 0-18.5)(25 patients) were diagnosed with the problem/s at the reported encounter (i.e. a new problem). The remaining 90.9% had their gastrointestinal problem diagnosed previously.

Only one medication (the current PPI) was prescribed for almost two thirds of patients (62.2%; 171 patients). One previous medication had been prescribed for 31.3% of patients and two previous medications for 6.6%.

The most common current PPI for GI problems was Omeprazole (42.6%), followed by Pantoprazole (26.2%) and Esomeprazole (17.1%). The "new generation" Rabeprazol and Esomeprazole account for 48% of PPIs for new GI problems, compared to 20.4% of current PPIs for old GI. Omeprazol comprised 16% of PPIs prescribed for new problems compared to 45.2% for old GI problems.

Of the 397 medication listed, 64.2% were initiated by a GP, 31.0% by a specialist.

GPs stated they had given sample packs of the current PPI medication to 13.8% of patients (38), and samples of previous medications to 3.6% (10 patients).

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