

SAND abstract No. 55 from the BEACH program 2003–04

Subject: Patient weight, perception of weight and weight loss

Organisation supporting this study: Roche Products Pty Ltd

Issues: Body mass index (BMI) of patients aged 18 years and over; patient perception of overweight; weight loss attempts and methods; the proportion who have type 2 diabetes.

Sample: 2,969 respondents from 99 GPs with 2,612 respondents aged 18 or over; data collection period: 01/04/2003–05/05/2003.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2003–04' on this website: http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm.

Summary of results

The age distribution of the sample was similar to that of patients at all BEACH encounters but under 18 year-olds were removed from these calculations. Female patients made up 60.9%, a slightly higher proportion than the average. Response rates (and therefore denominators) for the following questions varied.

Underweight patients accounted for 8.8% of respondents (95% CI: 7.4–10.2), 35.1% (95% CI: 32.6–37.7) were within normal range, 33.6% (95% CI: 31.2–35.9) were overweight and 22.5% (95% CI: 20.3–24.8) were obese. Overall, almost half saw themselves as overweight and over a third had attempted to lose weight in the previous 12 months. Diet and/or exercise was the most common method tried and the most frequently reported as successful in all weight groups. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes was 8.8% (95% CI: 7.4–10.3) among respondents.

In the underweight group, 5.5% (95% CI: 2.4–8.6) considered themselves to be overweight and approximately 9% had made at least one recent weight loss attempt. Type 2 diabetes prevalence was 2.4% (95% CI: 0.0–4.8). In the normal weight group, 18.4% (95% CI: 15.5–21.4) considered themselves to be overweight and approximately 20% had made at least one recent weight loss attempt. Type 2 diabetes prevalence was 3.9% (95% CI: 2.6–5.2).

In the overweight group, 58.5% (95% CI: 54.1–63.0) considered themselves to be overweight and approximately 41% had made a recent weight loss attempt. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes in this group was estimated to be 9.5% (95% CI: 7.3–11.7). In the obese group, 90.3% (95% CI: 88.1–92.6) considered themselves to be overweight and approximately 66% had made at least one weight loss attempt during the previous 12 months. Over 60% reported trying diet and/or exercise and almost 30% had received GP advice. Weight loss programs were tried by almost 17% and meal plans by about 14% of respondents. Only 8.7% (95% CI: 6.0–11.4) had tried prescribed medication for weight loss in the previous 3 years. The prevalence of type 2 diabetes in this group was estimated to be 18.1% (95% CI: 14.5–21.6).

BMI calculations for patients with type 2 diabetes showed 2.3% (95% CI: 0.0–4.7) were underweight, 15.7% (95% CI: 10.9–20.5) were normal, 35.9% (95% CI: 29.5–42.4) were overweight and 46.1% (95% CI: 38.6–53.6) were obese. Nearly two-thirds considered themselves overweight and over half had made at least one recent weight loss attempt.

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