

## **SAND abstract No. 64 from the BEACH program 2003–04**

### **Subject: Current use of statins by general practice patients**

**Organisation supporting this study:** AstraZeneca (Australia).

**Issues:** The proportion of patients currently using statins, cholesterol level at the commencement of statin therapy, proportion of patients have existing cardiovascular disease or risk factors for cardiovascular disease, initial statin regimen and duration of usage at the commencement of statin, current statin regimen and duration of usage, most recent cholesterol levels since the commencement of statin, GPs' clinical opinion on control of their patients' cholesterol levels.

**Sample:** 3,202 respondents from 109 GPs; data collection period: 2/12/2003–19/1/2004.

**Method:** Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2003–04' on this website:  
<[http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND\\_abstracts.htm](http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm)>.

### **Summary of results**

The sex distribution of the sample was similar to that of total BEACH encounters, with the majority (59.0%) of female patients. Patients aged 1–24 years made up 17.1%, lower than national average (21.2%) during April 2002 – March 2003 BEACH period.

Of the 3,202 respondents, 14.4% (n=462) were currently taking a statin, most commonly by patients aged 65–74 years (35.1%). The use of statin was significantly more likely in male (17.5%, 95% CI: 14.7–20.3) than in female patients (12.3%, 95% 10.2–14.4).

At the time of commencing statins, mean total cholesterol (TC) was 6.84 mmol/L, the mean of higher density lipoprotein (HDL) was 1.34 mmol/L, the mean of low density lipoprotein (LDL) 4.44 mmol/L, and the mean of triglycerides (TG) 2.44 mmol/L. After commencing statins, mean TC was 4.80 mmol/L, mean HDL 1.45 mmol/L, mean LDL 2.57 mmol/L, and mean TG was 1.83 mmol/L.

Of the 432 current statin users responding to the risk factor question, 66.9% had hypertension, 41.7% had existing coronary heart disease, and 24.5% had diabetes mellitus. None of the listed risk factors were recorded for 18.1% of the respondents. (Multiple response was allowed).

Details of initial treatment were available for 366 statin users. Of these, atorvastatin (42.4%), simvastatin (39.6%) and pravastatin (15.0%) accounted for 97.0% of initial medications.

Details of current statin medication were available for 398 statin users. There were 398 statins in the current treatment. Atorvastatin (47.0%), simvastatin (38.9%) and pravastatin (13.3%) remained the most common and accounted for 99.2% in total.

GPs reported that cholesterol level was adequately controlled for the majority (69.9%) of the 419 current statin users responding to management plan question. The remainder (30.1%, n=126) were the patients whose cholesterol level was not sufficiently controlled. Of these 126 patients, GPs had other management plans for 61.9%, increased the dose of statin for 37.3%, changed the statin being used for 6.4% and had additional therapy for 4.0%.

Of the 73 other managements proposed for patients whose cholesterol was not adequately controlled, 28.8% were lifestyle changes, which included change of diet, weight loss, or exercise.

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