

SAND abstract No. 66 from the BEACH program 2003–04

Subject: Anti-psychotic medication use by general practice patients

Organisation supporting this study: Janssen-Cilag Pty Ltd

Issues: The prevalence of anti-psychotic medication use (current or in the last 12 months), indications for anti-psychotic medication, length of time on anti-psychotic medications, GP perceived patient compliance in taking anti-psychotic medications, who is responsible for the management of the condition for which these medications are/were taken.

Sample: 3,338 patients from 117 GPs; data collection period: 24/02/2004–29/03/2004.

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 sex distribution of respondents was similar to the distribution of the total BEACH sample with the majority (58.4%) being female. The sample was slightly older than average, with a significant over representation of patients aged 75 years or more and fewer young people aged less than 15 years.

A total of 71 patients (2.1%, 95% CI: 1.5–2.7) were currently taking, or had taken in the previous 12 months, anti-psychotic medication. There was no significant difference between the proportion of males (2.3%, 95% CI: 1.4–3.3) and females (2.0%, 95% CI: 1.3–2.8) taking anti-psychotic medication.

For these 71 patients, the most common indication for anti-psychotic medication was schizophrenia (n=26, 36.6%), followed by behavioural disturbance in dementia (n=12, 16.9%), bipolar mania (n=11, 15.5%) and schizoaffective disorder (n=10, 14.1%).

A total of 84 anti-psychotic medications were recorded. The most common was olanzapine, taken by 23 patients and accounting for 27.4% of these medications. Fewer than one in ten patients were taking risperidone (8 patients, 9.5% of medications) or haloperidol (7 patients, 8.3% of medications). Those on olanzapine had been taking this medication for an average 30 months, those on risperidone for an average 22 months and those on haloperidol for an average of almost 7 years. Only 12 patients had been prescribed another anti-psychotic prior to their most recent medication. Olanzapine was also the most common of these (n=3).

GPs thought the majority of their patients were compliant (n=55, 88.3% of the 66 responses to this question) in taking their anti-psychotic medication. They thought that 11 patients (16.7%) were partially compliant. None of the patients were thought to be non-compliant in taking their medication.

Responses were received for 69 patients regarding who managed them for their condition. The GP was involved in the management of almost all (94.2%) of these patients, most often in combination with a specialist/psychiatrist (47.8%) but often alone (34.8%). Only 8 patients (11.6%) were being managed by a community team in collaboration with the GP.

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