

## **SAND abstract No. 67 from the BEACH program 2004–05**

### **Subject: Risk factors of patients on lipid-lowering medications**

**Organisation supporting this study:** Australian Department of Health and Ageing and the Australian General Practice Statistics and Classification Centre

**Issues:** Proportion of patients currently taking lipid-lowering medications. Risk factors for cardiovascular disease and blood cholesterol levels at the start of lipid therapy among patients on lipid-lowering medications.

**Sample:** 10,233 respondents from 353 GPs. Data collection periods: 29/10/02–2/12/02,  
28/10/03–1/12/03,  
30/03/04–7/06/04.

**Method:** Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2004–05' 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 age distribution of the sample of patients was similar to the age distribution for the BEACH annual encounters. The proportion of respondents who were female (60.5%, 95% CI: 58.8–62.2) was significantly higher than that of the annual BEACH (2003–2004) encounters (57.4%, 95% CI: 56.7–58.2).

Of the 10,233 respondents, 1302 (12.7%, 95% CI: 11.8–13.7) were currently using lipid-lowering medication. The use of lipid-lowering medication was significantly higher among patients aged 65 years or over (28.0%, 95% CI: 26.0–30.1) compared with those aged less than 65 years (7.6%, 95% CI: 6.8–8.4). The use of lipid-lowering medication was significantly higher in males (15.8%, 95% CI: 14.3–17.2) than in females (10.7%, 95% CI: 9.7–11.7).

Of those on lipid-lowering medications nearly half (47.5%) had existing cardiovascular disease at the start of therapy: 25.2% had diabetes, 3.5% had renal failure, 37.2% were overweight/obese and 31.7% had a family history of heart disease. One in eight (13.6%) had none of the listed risk factors at the start of therapy.

The mean age at the start of lipid medication therapy was 61 years. The mean length of lipid-lowering medication use was 5.3 years. The mean total cholesterol at the start of therapy was 7.0 mmol/L and the mean HDL cholesterol reading was 1.5 mmol/L. The mean systolic blood pressure reading at the start of therapy was 140 mmHg and the mean diastolic blood pressure reading was 82 mmHg.

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