

SAND abstract No. 69 from the BEACH program 2004–05

Subject: Patient weight, methods and medications tried for weight loss in adults

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; products and medications tried for weight loss.

Sample: 1,721 adult respondents from 70 GPs; data collection period: 08/06/2004–19/07/2004.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2004–05' on this website:
<http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm>.

Summary of results

The age distribution of the adult sample was similar to that of patients at all BEACH encounters. Female patients made up 60.9%, a slightly higher proportion than the average. Response rates (and therefore denominators) for the following questions varied.

BMI calculation was possible for 1,701 respondents – 6.5% (95% CI: 5.2–7.7) were underweight, 35.3% (95% CI: 32.2–38.4) were within normal range, 32.9% (95% CI: 30.3–38.4) were overweight and 25.4% (95% CI: 22.0–28.7) were obese. Almost half perceived themselves as overweight and 40.0% had attempted to lose weight in the previous 12 months. Diet/exercise was the method most frequently tried, and was the method reported as the most successful in all weight groups. Respondents had tried 47 over-the-counter or prescribed weight loss medications in total, 25.0% of these being Orlistat (mean duration of use 2.4 months). Sibutramine (19.2%) was used for a mean duration of 3.5 months and Phentermine (17%) for a mean of 2.1 months.

Of those underweight (n=106), 6.6% considered themselves overweight and 5.5% had made at least one recent weight loss attempt. Five underweight patients had tried diet/exercise programs in the previous 12 months. In the normal weight group (n=586), 18.4% considered themselves to be overweight and 20.2% (of 519 respondents) had made at least one recent weight loss attempt. Diet/exercise had been tried by 17.4%, and was again the most successful method (53.6% of 97 respondents). Ten weight loss medications were tried by this group.

In the overweight group (n=545), 60.0% considered themselves to be overweight and approximately 47% (of 519 respondents) had made a recent weight loss attempt. Diet / exercise, again reported as the most successful method, had been tried by 38.7%, 11.3% had received GP advice, 4.9% had tried meal plans, and 4.7% had tried a weight loss program in the previous year. Ten weight loss medications were tried by this group also. In the obese group (n=425), 89.3% considered themselves to be overweight and approximately 65.0% had made at least one weight loss attempt during the previous 12 months. Over 50.0% reported trying diet / exercise, 20.1% had received GP advice, 10.4% had tried a weight loss program, 9.2% had tried meal plans and 5.9% had tried prescribed medications. Diet / exercise was again reported to be the most successful method. There were 25 weight loss medications recorded for this group, 28.0% of which were Orlistat, which was used for a mean duration of almost 3 months.

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