

SAND abstract No. 86 from the BEACH program 2005–06

Subject: Diabetes Types 1 and 2 and coronary heart disease

Organisations supporting this study: Merck Sharp & Dohme (Australia) Pty Ltd

Issues: Prevalence of diabetes types 1 and 2 and coronary heart disease (CHD); total cholesterol level and management for these patients; indicators of statin intolerance; management regimens for these patients.

Sample: 3,099 patient encounters from 105 GPs; data collection period: 03/05/2005 – 06/06/2006.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2005–06' on the website: <www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm>

Summary of results

The age and sex distribution of all patient encounters was the same as the distribution for all BEACH encounters in 2004–05, with the majority (59.1%) of patients being female.

Of the 3,099 respondents 455 patients (14.7%, 95% CI: 12.5–16.8) had either diabetes (type 1 or 2) and/or CHD: 26 (0.8%, 95% CI: 0.3–1.4) had diagnosed type 1 diabetes, 239 (7.7%, 95% CI: 6.4–9.0) had type 2 diabetes, and 257 (8.3%, 95% CI: 6.5–10.1) had CHD. Both diabetes and CHD were present in 66 respondents (2.1%, 95% CI: 1.5–2.7).

The most recent cholesterol levels were provided for 412 of the 455 patients with diabetes and/or CHD. Their mean cholesterol level was 4.7 mmol/L (95% CI: 4.6–4.8), the median was 4.6 mmol/L and the range was 2.1 to 9.9 mmol/L.

Information on whether the cholesterol level was adequately managed was provided for 404 of the 455 patients with diabetes and/or CHD. In the clinical opinion of their GP, 7 in 10 (68.8%, 95% CI: 63.3–74.3) patients with diabetes (either type 1 or 2) and/or CHD currently had their cholesterol adequately controlled. Adequate control had been achieved for 65.1% of all patients with diabetes, 76.1% of all patients with CHD, and 81.7% of patients with both diabetes and CHD.

Of the 455 patients with diabetes and/or CHD, medication management information was provided for 429. Of these, 63.4% (95% CI: 57.1–69.7) were currently taking a statin, and 1.6% (95% CI: 0.3–3.0) were taking a fibrate. No patients were taking a cholestyramine. A further 35.2% of patients with diabetes and/or CHD were not taking any of these medications. The most frequently used statins were atorvastatin (45.5% of patients with diabetes and/or CHD) and simvastatin (40.1% of patients with diabetes and/or CHD). One quarter (24.7%) of patients with diabetes were managed with diet and exercise only, with the remainder being treated with diet and exercise plus medication.

Information about tolerance problems was provided for 261 of the 272 patients taking statins, and 18 (6.9%) of these had experienced some intolerance in relation to their statin use.

Muscle pain (myalgia), nausea and coordination problems were the most common problems experienced.

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