SAND abstract No. 157 from the BEACH program 2009–10

Subject: Depression and antidepressant use in general practice patients

Organisation supporting this study: Wyeth Australia Pty Ltd

Issues: Prevalence of current diagnosed depression; presence of listed comorbidities (anxiety, insomnia, back complaint, hypertension, lipid disorder, diabetes, asthma, ischaemic heart disease, gastro-oesophageal reflux disease, arthritis, cancer, other) in patients with depression; their current use of antidepressants; medication side effects thought (GP clinical opinion) due to the antidepressant medication(s).

Sample: 5,704 patients from 195 GPs; data collection periods: 24/02/2009–30/03/2009 and 01/12/2009–18/01/2010. Note: results from the first of these data periods were previously reported as SAND Abstract number 142, in General practice activity in Australia 2008–09.


Summary of results

The sex distribution of surveyed patients did not differ from that of patients at all BEACH encounters 2008–09, 42.4% being male. However, this sample was significantly older than patients at all encounters, a greater proportion being aged 65 years and over.

The prevalence of current diagnosed depression among the 5,704 patients was 16.4%, (95% CI: 15.0–17.9), and significantly higher among females (18.8%, 95% CI: 16.9–20.6) than males (13.2%, 95% CI 11.6–14.8). Prevalence was highest among those aged 25–44 years (21.6%) and 45–64 years (21.9%), then decreased significantly to 12.2% among those aged 75 years or more. Of the 936 patients with depression, 840 (89.7%) had at least one comorbidity and 66.6% had two or more. Most common were anxiety (56.7%), insomnia (34.1%), hypertension (27.6%), back complaint (24.3%), lipid disorder (19.7%) and gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (18.5%).

Of the 936 patients with diagnosed depression, 915 (97.8%) responded to the antidepressant question. Of these, 695 (76.0%) were taking antidepressant(s), and 659 patients gave details of 689 antidepressants being taken. About half (51.5%) of these were selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors—largely accounted for by sertraline (14.5% of all antidepressants), citalopram (11.6%) and escitalopram (10.4%). A further 12.6% were non-selective monoamine reuptake inhibitors; 2.4% were monoamine oxidase A inhibitors (selective or non-selective); and 33.4% were ‘other antidepressants’ (venlafaxine being most common at 17.1%). The presence/absence of side-effects of antidepressants was reported for 650 (93.5%) of the 695 patients: 451 (69.4%) reported no side-effects; and 199 (30.6%) reported 301 side effects (average 1.5 per patient). The most common side effects were sedation (10.8% of those on antidepressants), weight gain (9.9%) and sexual dysfunction (7.5%).

Among those taking antidepressants, prevalence of the common comorbidities paralleled that of all patients with depression. GPs detailed 2,035 other prescribed medications for 627 patients on antidepressant(s) for depression (average 3.2 per patient). Patients on no other medications reported fewer side effects of antidepressants, but reported side effects of antidepressants did not increase with increased numbers of other prescribed medications.

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INSTRUCTIONS
Please answer the following questions for **ALL** of the next 30 **PATIENTS** in the order in which the patients are seen.
Please **DO NOT** select patients to suit the topic being investigated.

**Depression**
Please indicate whether the patient **currently** has diagnosed depression.
If this patient does **not** have diagnosed depression please end the questions here for this patient.

**Comorbidities**
Please use the tick boxes to advise whether this patient has any of the listed **comorbidities**.
If the patient has a chronic condition that is not listed please specify it in the space provided.

**Antidepressant medication**
Please indicate whether this patient is **currently** taking an antidepressant medication.
If **YES**, please specify the name of the antidepressant medication.
If **NO** please end the questions here for this patient.

**Side effects of anti-depressant medication**
Please use the tick boxes to advise whether this patient is **currently** experiencing **side effects** that you believe, in your clinical opinion, are due to their antidepressant medication.
If this patient is **not** experiencing any side effects please tick the box labelled **‘no side effects’**.

**Does this patient currently have diagnosed depression?**
- Yes
- No → **End questions**

**Other diagnosed medical conditions:**
- Anxiety (Tick all that apply)
- Ischaemic heart disease
- Insomnia
- Arthritis
- Back complaint
- Cancer
- Hypertension
- Lipid disorders
- Other chronic problems: (please specify)
- Diabetes
- Asthma (please specify)

**Currently taking antidepressant medication?**
- Yes (please specify)
- No → **End questions**

**Other prescribed medications taken by this patient:**
(please specify medication name)

**Side effects that in your clinical opinion are due to current antidepressant med:**
- Sedation
- Sexual dysfunction
- Other: (please specify)
- Sleep disturbance
- Weight gain
- Agitation
- Anxiety
- Nausea (please specify)
- No side effects

**Other prescribed medications taken by this patient:**
(please specify medication name)

- None