

SAND abstract No. 101 from the BEACH program 2006–07

Subject: Types of medicine use and patient use of medicines list

Organisation supporting this study: National Prescribing Service

Issues: To determine: the proportion of general practice patients who regularly take medicine and the type(s) of medicines they take; the types of medicines recorded in the patient's medical record; the use of Medicines Lists in general practice patients who regularly take medicines; the types of medicines included in the Medicines List.

Sample: 5,528 encounters with 187 GPs; data collection period: 11/07/2006 – 18/09/2006

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2006–07 on this website: <http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm>.

Summary of results

The age distribution of respondents differed a little from the average for BEACH, with fewer patients aged 25–44 years and more aged 75+ at these encounters; sex distribution was similar to BEACH (general practice) encounters, the majority (55.7%) being female.

At the 5,528 patient encounters, GPs indicated that 3,829 (69.3%; 95% CI: 66.5–72.0) patients regularly took at least one of the medicine types listed. Of these, 3,767 specified whether they had as Medicines list, and 31.0% (95% CI: 27.3–34.6) stated they did.

Prescription medications

Overall, 3,493 (63.2%, 95% CI: 60.3–66.1) regularly took prescription medicines and these were said to be recorded in the medical records for 3,415 (98.4%) of 3,470 respondents. Of 3,453 respondents 1,128 (32.7%) had a medicines list. The prescribed medications were said to be on the medicines list by 1,080 (99.7%) of 1,084 patients responding to this question.

Non-prescription medications

Overall, 790 (14.3%, 95% CI: 12.1–16.5) regularly took non-prescription medicines and these medications were said to be in the medical records for 354 (45.3%) of 781 respondents.

A medicines list was held by 234 (30.4) of 771 respondents and the non-prescription medications on the medicines list was confirmed by 148 (65.2%, 95% CI: 56.7–73.7).of 227 respondents to this question

Herbal/natural medicines

Overall, 495 (9.0%, 95% CI: 7.5–10.4) regularly took herbal/natural medicines. For 88 (18.0%) of 488 respondents the herbal/natural medications were in the medical records.

Of 487 respondents 147 (30.2) had a medicines list and the herbal/natural medications was on the medicines list of 72 (51.8%) of 139 respondents

Vitamins/minerals

Overall, 874 (15.8%, 95% CI: 13.4–18.2) regularly took vitamins/minerals and the presence of these vitamins/minerals in the medical record was confirmed for 195 (22.7%) of 861 patients responding to this question.

Of 856 respondents using vitamins/minerals who responded to the medicines list question, 253 (29.6, 95% CI: 23.7–35.4) had a medicines list. The presence of the vitamins/minerals on this list was confirmed by 149 of 240 respondents to this question (62.1%, 95% CI: 52.2–72.0).

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PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **TYPES OF MEDICINES AND PATIENT USE OF MEDICINES LIST**.

You may tear out this page as a guide to completing the following section of forms.

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask **ALL** of the **next 30 PATIENTS** the following questions **in the order in which the patients are seen**.

Please **DO NOT select patients** to suit the topic being investigated.

Types of medicines

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate box/es whether this patient **regularly** takes any of the **listed types of medicines**. (See definitions)

Tick as many as apply.

If the patient does not take any medicines **please end the questions** here.

Medicines recorded in the medical record

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate box/es which **types of medicines** are **recorded in the patient's medical record**. (See definitions)

Tick as many as apply.

Definitions

Prescription medicines: require a prescription

***Non-prescription medicines:** any tablets, syrups, ointments, inhalers or drops that can be bought over the counter at a chemist, health food or grocery store without a prescription. This category excludes herbal and other natural medicines, and vitamins and minerals.

***Herbal and other natural medicines:** includes herbal products, homeopathic remedies and traditional medicines.

***Vitamins and minerals:** any type of vitamin or mineral available without a prescription.

* These medicines can be self-prescribed or recommended by a health professional, alternative health practitioner or other person. They can be used in place of or in addition to prescription medicines

Regular use of medicines: medicines taken on an ongoing basis or taken for short term treatment of a specific problem.

Medicines List: a document or card where details of the medicines (e.g. name, dose taken, frequency of use, reason for medicine, date of commencement) taken by the patient are recorded. Medicines Lists are carried by patients and provided to health professionals (e.g. GPs, pharmacists) involved in their management.

Medicines List

Please advise if the patient keeps a **list of the medicines** they take regularly. (See definitions)

If **'no'** or **'unsure'** please **end the questions** here.

Medicines included in the Medicines List

If the patient has a Medicines List, either from you or from another source, please advise the **types of medicines included in the list**.

Does the patient regularly take any of the following?
(tick all that apply)

- Prescription medicines
- Non-prescription medicines
- Herbal and/or other natural medicines
- Vitamins and/or minerals
- None → End questions

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What medicines are recorded in the patient's medical record?
(tick all that apply)

- Prescription medicines
- Non-prescription medicines
- Herbal and/or other natural medicines
- Vitamins and/or minerals
- None

Does the patient keep a list of any of the medicines they take regularly?

- Yes
- No → End questions
- Unsure → End questions

Which of the following are included in the patient's Medicines List?
(tick all that apply)

- Prescription medicines
- Non-prescription medicines
- Herbal and/or other natural medicines
- Vitamins and/or minerals