

SAND abstract No. 140 from the BEACH program 2008–09

Subject: Atrial fibrillation/flutter in general practice patients

Organisation supporting this study: Sanofi Aventis Australia Pty Ltd

Issues: Prevalence of atrial fibrillation or flutter among general practice patients; presence of selected comorbidities (diabetes, hypertension, heart failure, ischaemic heart disease, cerebrovascular/transient ischaemic attack (CVA/TIA), history of myocardial infarction, other CVD) among patients with atrial fibrillation or flutter (AF); current and previous medication taken for AF; whether GP or specialist initiated medication; duration of use; reason for change from previous medication.

Sample: 2,963 patients from 102 GPs; data collection period: 20/01/2009 – 23/02/2009.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2008-09' available at: www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm.

Summary of results

The age and sex distributions of this sample of patients were similar to patients at all 2007–08 BEACH encounters. Of the 2,963 patients, 127 (4.3%, 95% CI: 3.4–5.1) had atrial fibrillation and 7 patients (0.2%) had flutter making a total of 134 patients (4.5%) with atrial fibrillation or flutter. There were 2,829 patients (95.5%) who had neither condition. The proportion of patients with atrial fibrillation or flutter rose significantly with age from 2.4% of patients aged 45–64 years to 15.0% of patients 75 years and over. There were no statistically significant differences between the sexes in the proportion with atrial fibrillation or flutter. Among male patients, 5.6% had atrial fibrillation and 0.3% had flutter. The results for females were 3.3% and 0.2%.

Of the 134 patients with atrial fibrillation/flutter (AF patients), 116 (86.6%) had at least one of the conditions and 18 patients (13.4%) had none. Thirty-eight AF patients (28.4%) had one of the comorbidities and another 37 (27.6%) had two. Twenty-five patients (18.7%) had three comorbidities. A total of 258 comorbidities were recorded. Hypertension was the most common condition, recorded for 64.2% of AF patients, followed by heart failure (37.3%), ischaemic heart disease (35.8%) and diabetes (24.6% of AF patients).

Among 128 of the respondents with AF, 123 (96.1%) were currently taking medication for the condition. A total of 222 medications were recorded, of which 72.0% were initiated by a specialist and 28.0% by a GP. For 86.7% of these medications, duration of use was more than 12 months. Antithrombotic agents were the most common (42.8% of medications for AF), and almost all of these were warfarin. Cardiac therapy accounted for 21.2% of medications and about two-thirds of these were digoxin. Beta-blocking agents made up 19.8%, and about two-thirds of these were sotalol or metoprolol. Acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) was recorded 11 times, and was usually initiated by the GP (63.6%). Other medications initiated more often by the GP were mainly ACE inhibitors but numbers were small for these medications. Of 125 AF respondents, 9 (7.2%) had changed their medication during the previous 12 months. Aspirin and amiodarone were each recorded twice, and half of the patients cited lack of efficacy as the reason for change. Numbers were too small to draw conclusions at this level of analysis.

Correspondence to: Janice Charles, AGPSCC

AIHW Australian GP Statistics and Classification Centre, 2009. SAND abstract No.140 from the BEACH program: Atrial fibrillation/flutter in general practice patients. Sydney: AGPSCC University of Sydney. ISSN 1444-9072

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The shaded section of the following forms asks questions about **ATRIAL FIBRILLATION / FLUTTER**.
 You may tear out this page as a guide to completing the following section of forms.

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.

Atrial fibrillation and atrial flutter

Please use the tick boxes to advise whether this patient has **atrial fibrillation** or **atrial flutter**.

If the patient **does not have** either atrial fibrillation or atrial flutter you should **end the questions here**.

Comorbidities

Please use the tick boxes to advise whether the patient has also been **diagnosed** with any of the **listed conditions**.

If the patient has a **cardiovascular disease** that is not listed please tick the box labelled '**Other CVD**' and **specify the condition**.

Medications for atrial fibrillation/ flutter

Please advise which **medication(s)** for **atrial fibrillation/flutter** this patient is currently taking.

Please include any anticoagulants.

For each medication please **circle the appropriate responses** to indicate:

- **who initiated the medication** (a GP or specialist)
- **how long** the patient has been taking the medication.

Change in atrial fibrillation/flutter medication

Please advise whether this patient's **atrial fibrillation/ flutter medication** has **changed** in the **previous 12 months**.

This question refers to changes in the atrial fibrillation/flutter medication(s) being used. It does not refer to changes in the regimen of the atrial fibrillation/flutter medication(s).

If the only change has been a change in regimen (e.g. increased dosage) please tick 'no'.

If the patient's atrial fibrillation/flutter medication has **not changed** in the previous 12 months you should **end the questions here**.

Previous atrial fibrillation/ flutter medication

If the patient's atrial fibrillation/ flutter medication has changed please write the **name(s)** of the **most recent previous atrial fibrillation/flutter medication(s)** in the space provided.

Reasons for change

Please use the tick boxes to indicate the **reasons for the most recent change** in the patient's atrial fibrillation/ flutter medication.

Tick as many as apply.

<p>Does this patient have:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Atrial fibrillation <input type="checkbox"/> Atrial flutter <input type="checkbox"/> Neither of the above → End questions	<p>Does this patient also have:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes <input type="checkbox"/> Hypertension <input type="checkbox"/> Heart failure <input type="checkbox"/> Ischaemic heart disease <input type="checkbox"/> CVA / TIA <input type="checkbox"/> Myocardial infarct Hx <input type="checkbox"/> Other CVD... <i>(please specify)</i> _____	<p>Current medications for atrial fibrillation/flutter are:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Medication name</th> <th>Initiated by</th> <th>Duration of use</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>GP / Specialist</td> <td><6 / 6-12 / >12mths</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>GP / Specialist</td> <td><6 / 6-12 / >12mths</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>GP / Specialist</td> <td><6 / 6-12 / >12mths</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>GP / Specialist</td> <td><6 / 6-12 / >12mths</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <input type="checkbox"/> No medication for atrial fibrillation/flutter	Medication name	Initiated by	Duration of use	_____	GP / Specialist	<6 / 6-12 / >12mths	_____	GP / Specialist	<6 / 6-12 / >12mths	_____	GP / Specialist	<6 / 6-12 / >12mths	_____	GP / Specialist	<6 / 6-12 / >12mths	<p>Has the atrial fibrillation/flutter medication changed in the past 12 months?</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No → End questions	<p>If 'yes', most recent previous atrial fibrillation/flutter medication(s) was:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Reason(s) for change were:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Interactions with other meds <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of efficacy <input type="checkbox"/> Toxicity of medication <input type="checkbox"/> Other side effects: <i>(please specify)</i> _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
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