

SAND abstract No. 40 from the BEACH program 2002–03

Subject: Type 2 diabetes mellitus, prevalence and management

Organisation supporting this study: Roche Products Pty Ltd.

Issues: The prevalence of type 2 diabetes among general practice patients; the treatments being utilised for type 2 diabetes management; HbA1c levels and regularity of testing; frequency of GP consultations for diabetes management.

Sample: 2,876 respondents from 97 GPs; data collection period: 7/5/2002–10/6/2002.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method: 2002-03' on the FMRC website (http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm).

Summary of results

The age-sex distribution of respondents was similar to the distribution of the total BEACH sample with the majority (58.8%) being female and those aged 25-44 and 45-64 years accounting for 23.6% and 26.3% of the patient population respectively.

A total of 205 patients (7.1%, 95%CI: 5.6-8.7) had confirmed type 2 diabetes. Prevalence for patients aged 65-74 years was 17.6% (95%CI: 8.9-26.2), while patients aged 45-64 and those aged 75 or more had similar rates (11.0%, 95% CI: 4.7-17.3 and 12.4%, 95% CI: 0.0-26.4 respectively). There were no significant differences between any of these age groups. There was also no significant difference between the prevalence for males (8.0%, 95% CI: 4.3-11.8) and for females (6.2%, 95% CI: 3.5-8.9).

Diet and/or exercise was the most commonly used treatment, being utilised by 75.9% of patients with type 2 diabetes, either alone or in combination with other methods. Metformin was the current treatment for 50.7%, sulfonylurea for 33.5% and insulin for 16.3% of patients with type 2 diabetes. Almost half (44.3%) of the patients with type 2 diabetes used one treatment method only, 35.0% used two treatment methods, and the remaining 20.7% used between 3 and 5 treatments. Diet/exercise in combination with one or more medications was used by 50.3% of patients with type 2 diabetes, diet/exercise alone was used by 25.6%, and medication/s alone was used by 24.1%.

The most recent HbA1c level was available for 182 of the 205 patients with type 2 diabetes. The mean HbA1c level for these patients was 7.3% (95% CI: 7.0-7.6), the median was 7.0% with a range of 5.1% to 13.2%. Patients using only one treatment method had a mean HbA1c level of 6.8% (95% CI: 6.6-7.1) while those using 2 treatments and 3-5 treatments had mean levels of 7.5% (95% CI: 7.1-8.0) and 7.7% (95% CI: 7.2-8.2) respectively. Patients using diet/exercise only had a mean HbA1c level of 6.4% (95% CI: 6.2-6.5) which was significantly lower than the mean level for patients using medication/s only (7.6%, 95% CI: 7.0-8.1) and those using diet/exercise plus medication/s (7.6%, 95% CI: 7.2-8.0). The average number of months since their last HbA1c test was 3.6 (95%CI: 3.0-4.2) with a median of 3 and a range 0.03-22 months. The average number of GP visits during the previous 12 months for patients with type 2 diabetes was 6.6 (95%CI: 5.5-7.6) visits with a median of 5 visits and a range of 0 to 30 visits.

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