

## **SAND abstract No. 83 from the BEACH program 2005–06**

### **Subject: Prevalence and management of migraine**

**Organisations supporting this study:** Janssen-Cilag Pty Ltd & Australian General Practice Statistics and Classification Centre.

**Issues:** Prevalence of migraine among patients attending general practice; frequency of migraine attacks; current and previous prophylaxis medications; current acute medications.

**Sample:** 5,663 respondents from 191 GPs; data collection period: 07/06/2005–11/07/2005  
29/11/2005–16/01/2006.

**Method:** Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2004–05' on this website:  
<[http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND\\_abstracts.htm](http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm)>.

### **Summary of results**

The age-sex distribution of respondents was similar to that of patients at all BEACH encounters. Of the 5,663 respondents, 649 (11.5%; 95% CI: 10.0–12.9) suffered from migraine attacks. Prevalence of migraine was significantly higher among female respondents (14.9%; 95% CI: 13.0–16.7) than among males (6.1%; 95% CI: 4.7–7.4).

Almost two-thirds (64.3%) of migraine sufferers experience less than 1 migraine per month. About one in ten sufferers experience 1, 2 or 3+ migraines per month (12.8%, 10.5% & 12.3% respectively). Reported number of migraine attacks per month was similar for males and females.

Only 8.3% (95% CI: 6.0–10.6) of migraine patients were on current prophylaxis medication. Patients with 2 or more migraines per month (22.1%) were significantly more likely to be taking prophylaxis medication than those having less than 1 migraine per month (2.3%). As migraine frequency increased, rates of current prophylaxis medication use increased (trend test;  $p < 0.0001$ ), the most frequently used being pizotifen followed by propranolol.

Previous prophylaxis medication had been used by 15.0% of general practice migraine patients. The most frequently used previous prophylaxis medication was pizotifen, followed by propranolol. The most common reason for discontinuation of prophylaxis medication was lack of efficacy (45.8%), followed by side effects (28.1%). Of the 96 patients who took previous prophylaxis medications, only 16 (16.7%) were switched onto another prophylaxis. Therefore, the majority of these patients (83.3%) were not taking second line prophylaxis when the first prophylaxis medication failed.

In contrast, four in five (79.3%; 95% CI: 75.2–83.5) general practice migraine patients currently use acute medication as needed for migraine. About three quarters (72.9%) of migraine sufferers having less than 1 migraine per month were taking acute medication, compared to around 90% of those with 1, 2 or 3+ migraines per month. As migraine frequency increased, rates of current acute medication use increased (trend test;  $p < 0.0001$ ). The most frequently used acute medications were paracetamol, paracetamol/codeine, ibuprofen and sumatriptan.

Overall, less than 10% of migraine patients were currently on prophylaxis medication, with most on pizotifen or propranolol. In contrast, most used acute medication as needed.

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