

SAND abstract No. 85 from the BEACH program 2005–06

Subject: Management of osteoporotic fractures in general practice patients

Organisation supporting this study: Roche Products Pty Ltd

Issues: The proportion of general practice patients who currently have, or have a history of, osteoporotic fractures; the proportion of these patients taking medication for the problem; the proportion who have ceased taking osteoporosis medication; the proportion enrolled in a patient support program; the current management status of patients.

Sample: 3,071 respondents from 105 GPs; data collection period: 03/05/2005 – 06/06/2005.

Method: Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method 2005–06' on this website: <http://www.fmrc.org.au/publications/SAND_abstracts.htm>.

Summary of results

The age-sex distribution of respondents was the same as the distribution for all BEACH encounters in 2004–05, with the majority of patients (60.2%, 95% CI: 57.0–63.4) being female. More than half of the patients were aged 45 years or over.

Of the 3,071 respondents, 170 (5.5%, 95% CI: 4.2–6.9) had current or previous osteoporotic fracture/s. Prevalence increased significantly with age to 23.2% among patients aged 75 years and over. More female patients (7.9%, 95% CI: 6.0–9.9) had osteoporotic fracture(s) than male patients (2.0%, 95% CI: 1.2–2.8). Of the patients with current or previous osteoporotic fracture, 79.3% were taking a prescribed osteoporosis medication and one in six (17.4%) was enrolled in a patient support or information program for osteoporosis.

Current management status was reported for 163 of the 170 respondents with current or previous osteoporotic fracture/s. Of these, 72.4% (n=118) were continuing their osteoporosis medication, and 11.0% (n=18) were no longer taking prescribed osteoporosis medication. Eleven patients (6.8%) had never had and were not starting any osteoporosis medication, and eleven (6.8%) were commencing a first prescription.

Data about the period since osteoporosis medication ceased was available for 16 of the 18 patients no longer taking prescribed osteoporosis medication. Of these 16 patients, ten had ceased the medication for one year or longer.

The likelihood of commencing another osteoporosis medication was provided for seventeen of 18 patients no longer taking prescribed osteoporosis medication. GPs indicated that eight patients were unlikely to commence another osteoporosis medication.

Correspondence to: Janice Charles, AGPSCC