

## **SAND abstract No. 33 from the BEACH program 2001–02**

### **Subject: Prevalence and management of cardiovascular risk factors**

**Organisation supporting this study:** Aventis Pharma Pty. Ltd.

**Issues:** This study was designed to measure the prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors in general practice patients. The issue explored was whether those with risk factors were using any preventive therapies to manage them, and if so which medications were being prescribed.

**Sample:** 3,108 encounters from 105 GPs. Data collected between 4/12/2001–21/1/2002.

**Method:** Detailed in the paper entitled 'SAND Method' on the web site (<http://www.fmrc.org.au/beach.html>). A list of risk factors for cardiovascular disease included: hypertension, high total cholesterol (>5.2mmol/L), low HDL (<0.9mmol/L), current smoker, microalbuminuria, evidence of previous vascular disease, none of the above. A list of cardiovascular conditions included: hypertension, coronary artery disease, peripheral vascular disease, stroke (including previous), diabetes (any type), none of the above.

### **Summary of results:**

The age-sex distribution of respondents was similar to the distribution for all BEACH (general practice) encounters, with the majority (58.3%) of patients being female.

The prevalence of at least one cardiovascular risk factor in this general practice patient population was 39.5% (95% CI: 36.4–42.5), the majority (58.8%) having only one risk factor. The most prevalent cardiovascular risk factor was hypertension (25.7%, 95%CI: 23.1–28.4), followed by high cholesterol (17.8%, 95%CI: 15.8–19.8). The most common risk factor/combination of risk factors was hypertension only, which was found in 365 (29.9%) patients. Other common risk factor combinations were hypertension and high cholesterol, followed by current smoker only, which were the risk profiles of 17.9% and 13.7% of patients respectively.

Almost a third (31.5%, 95%CI: 28.6–34.5) of patients had at least cardiovascular disease. The most common cardiovascular disease was hypertension (alone or in combination), diagnosed for 26.0% (n=796) of the 3,063 patients who provided these data. Other cardiovascular diseases were considerably less common, with 7.9% of patients having coronary artery disease and 7.6% having diabetes. Of those 796 patients with hypertension 49.6% had no other cardiovascular disease.

Of the 966 patients with at least one cardiovascular disease, 72.0% were prescribed at least one preventive medication by their GP. The three most common medications prescribed were aspirin (13.4% of preventers), atorvastatin (7.3%) and simvastatin (6.8%). Of patients with at least one of the listed cardiovascular diseases, 43.2% (95% CI: 39.2–47.1) were taking an ACE inhibitor. The majority of ACE inhibitors prescribed were for management of hypertension (76.9%), but other indications included elevated blood pressure (4.8%), IHD (4.5%) and heart failure (3.3%).

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