

Salma Fahridin, Graeme Miller

Australian GP Statistics & Classification Centre, University of Sydney, New South Wales.



Management of HIV/AIDS

Between April 2000 and March 2009, HIV infection/AIDS were managed 672 times in the BEACH (Bettering the Evaluation and Care of Health) program at a rate of 80 contacts per 100 000 encounters or about 82 000 encounters annually across Australia. The vast majority of these problems (98%) were HIV infection or HIV positive, rather than AIDS.

Table 1. Medications prescribed and pathology tests at HIV infection/AIDS encounters

Management type	Rate per 100 HIV/AIDS problems
Medications	85.1
Lamivudine	9.4
Tenofovir disoproxil	7.9
Nevirapine	7.3
Lopinavir/ritonavir	7.3
Ritonavir	6.3
Efavirenz	5.5
Abacavir/lamivudine	5.4
Abacavir	5.2
Emtricitabine/tenofovir disoproxil	4.6
Pathology tests	149.4
HIV	33.9
Full blood count	28.6
Blood, other	23.1
Liver function	16.7
Multibiochemical analysis	13.0
Electrolytes/urea/creatinine	8.6
Sexually transmissible infections	4.6

■ **Male patients accounted for 96.4% of all encounters where HIV/AIDS was managed. Patients in the 25–44 years age group and 45–64 years age group had the highest management rates of HIV/AIDS (54.6% and 40.6% respectively). Just over half the patients who had HIV/AIDS managed, held a Commonwealth Government concession card, which is 10% more than the total patients sampled in BEACH. Patients were more likely to live in a major city than the total BEACH sample. Most of the patients had been diagnosed previously, with only 2.7% of them indicated as newly diagnosed, and patients were more likely to have their problem managed at the same practice, with 98% of patients having been seen previously at the practice, compared with 92% of the total BEACH sample.**

A psychological problem was the most common comorbidity to be managed with HIV/AIDS, at 28.1 per 100 HIV/AIDS encounters. These were mainly depression, sleep disturbance and drug abuse. Viral hepatitis was also managed frequently with HIV/AIDS, at 4.6 per 100 HIV/AIDS encounters.

Medications were prescribed at a rate of 85.1 per 100 HIV/AIDS problems. About 85% of these were direct acting antivirals. The most common medications are listed in *Table 1*.

A clinical treatment, mainly counselling and advice, occurred at a rate of 46.6 per 100 HIV/AIDS problems, double the rate for all BEACH encounters. Pathology tests were ordered frequently, at a rate of 149.4 per 100 HIV/AIDS problems, but referrals were rare. The most common test ordered was a HIV test, followed by full blood count, other blood test, and liver function test (*Table 1*).

Conflict of interest: none declared.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the GP participants in the BEACH program and all members of the BEACH team. Financial contributors to BEACH between 2000 and 2009: Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; National Prescribing Service; AstraZeneca Pty Ltd (Australia); Janssen-Cilag Pty Ltd; Merck, Sharp and Dohme (Australia) Pty Ltd; Pfizer Australia; Abbott Australasia; Sanofi-Aventis Australia Pty Ltd; Wyeth Australia Pty Ltd; Aventis Pharma Pty Ltd; Roche Products Pty Ltd, Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs; Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

AFP CORRESPONDENCE afp@racgp.org.au