

8 Non-pharmacological treatments

Non-pharmacological treatments (or other treatments) are defined either as clinical treatments, encompassing education, counselling and advice provided to the patient by the GP at the encounter, or as procedural treatments, including minor procedures that are conducted in the surgery by the GP, such as excisions and dressings.⁹⁶

Non-pharmacological treatments were provided to patients aged 65+ at a rate of 46.7 per 100 encounters (Table 4.2). This rate is significantly lower than the non-pharmacological treatment rate in the overall BEACH sample, of 51.9 per 100 encounters.⁹⁶

8.1 Clinical treatments by age group

Clinical treatments were provided by the GP at a rate of 30.8 per 100 encounters with patients aged 65 years and over (Table 8.1). The clinical treatment most often recorded was counselling/advice regarding nutrition and weight, at an average rate of 5.1 per 100 encounters. Advice and education concerning medication was also relatively frequently given (4.8 per 100 encounters). General advice and education was provided at a rate of 4.7 per 100 encounters, and this was followed by counselling of unspecified type (4.0 per 100).

Clinical treatments were provided significantly more often at encounters with patients of 65–74 years (33.4 per 100 encounters), than at those with older patients (28.5 per 100 encounters) (Table 8.1).

Specifically, counselling or advice regarding nutrition and weight was given at almost double the rate at encounters with 65–74-year-old patients (6.5 per 100 encounters) than at those with older people (3.7 per 100).

8.2 Procedural treatments

The procedures most frequently performed at encounters with patients aged 65 years and over were the group of procedures including excision, removal of tissue, biopsy, debridement and cauterisation, recorded at an average rate of 3.6 per 100 encounters. This rate remained steady once the 65 years and over sample was further stratified into the 65–74 and 75 years and over age groups. This was followed by dressing, compression and tamponade (3.0 per 100 encounters), which was more commonly recorded at encounters with patients of 75 years or more (3.9 per 100 encounters) than at those with patients of 65–74 years (2.0 per 100) (Table 8.2).

Table 8.1: Most frequent clinical treatments

Clinical treatment	65–74 (n = 24,644)			75+ (n = 25,003)			Total 65+ (n = 49,647)		
	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL
Counsel/advice—nutrition/weight*	6.5	5.3	7.7	3.7	2.8	4.6	5.1	4.4	5.8
Advice/education—medication*	4.4	3.4	5.4	5.1	4.2	6.1	4.8	4.1	5.4
Advice/education*	5.0	3.9	6.0	4.4	3.4	5.4	4.7	4.0	5.3
Counselling—problem*	4.4	2.9	5.9	3.7	2.1	5.3	4.0	3.0	5.1
Advice/education—treatment*	3.2	2.2	4.3	3.2	2.2	4.1	3.2	2.6	3.8
Counselling—psychological*	2.3	1.3	3.3	2.0	1.2	2.9	2.2	1.7	2.6
Counsel/advice—exercise*	2.7	1.3	4.0	1.5	0.3	2.6	2.0	1.3	2.7
Reassurance & support	1.4	0.1	2.7	1.6	0.0	3.5	1.5	0.5	2.4
Other administrative/documentation	0.9	0.0	1.9	1.4	0.6	2.1	1.1	0.7	1.5
Counsel/advice—smoking*	0.5	0.0	2.0	0.3	0.0	2.0	0.4	0.0	1.0
Total clinical treatments	33.4	31.7	35.1	28.5	26.7	30.3	30.8	29.3	32.3

• Includes multiple ICPC–2 and ICPC–2 PLUS codes.

Note: Shading indicates statistically significant differences between age groups. Encs—encounters; LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit.

Table 8.2: Most common procedural treatments

Procedural treatment	65–74 (n = 24,647)			75+ (n = 25,003)			Total 65+ (n = 49,647)		
	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 encs	95% LCL	95% UCL
Excision/removal tissue/biopsy/destruction/debridement/cauterisation*	3.6	2.6	4.6	3.6	2.9	4.4	3.6	3.1	4.1
Dressing/pressure/compression/tamponade*	2.0	1.1	2.8	3.9	3.2	4.6	3.0	2.6	3.3
Physical medicine/rehabilitation*	2.0	0.8	3.1	1.7	0.7	2.7	1.8	1.3	2.4
Incision/drainage/flushing/aspiration/removal body fluid*	1.6	0.7	2.4	1.8	1.2	2.3	1.7	1.3	2.0
Other therapeutic procedures/surgery NEC*	1.4	0.0	3.4	1.0	0.0	2.8	1.2	0.1	2.3
Local injection/infiltration*	1.0	0.0	2.8	1.0	0.0	2.3	1.0	0.2	1.7
Repair/fixation/suture/cast/prosthetic device (apply/remove)*	0.9	0.0	1.9	0.8	0.0	1.6	0.8	0.4	1.2
Electrical tracings*	0.6	0.0	1.8	0.5	0.0	1.7	0.5	0.0	1.1
Physical function test*	0.6	0.0	3.4	0.5	0.0	2.9	0.5	0.0	2.0
Glucose test	0.5	0.0	2.1	0.4	0.0	1.9	0.5	0.0	1.3
Total procedures	15.0	14.0	15.9	15.7	14.8	16.5	15.3	14.6	16.0

• Includes multiple ICPC–2 and ICPC–2 PLUS codes.

Note: Shading indicates statistically significant differences between age groups. Encs—encounters; LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit.