

**Patient-based substudies from BEACH:  
abstracts and research tools  
1999–2006**

**Australian GP Statistics and Classification Centre**

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The Australian General Practice Statistics and Classification Centre (previously Unit) is a collaborating unit of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the University of Sydney, situated within the Family Medicine Research Centre at Westmead Hospital. It fulfils the obligation of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to collect statistics regarding general practitioners, their patients and their patients' care.

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# ***BEACH***

## ***Bettering the Evaluation And Care of Health***

### **Patient-based substudies from BEACH: abstracts and research tools 1999–2006**

**Australian GP Statistics and Classification Centre**

**Helena Britt, Graeme C Miller, Joan Henderson, Clare Bayram**

**July 2007**

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# Foreword

General practice remains the cornerstone of Australia's health service. One has only to look at countries that do not have general practice or something similar, to see what a shambles follows. One of the troubling features about health care in the US is that primary care is often provided by specialists, at specialist rates and with concomitant use of special investigations. At the other end of socioeconomic spectrum, sub-Saharan African countries struggle to dispense medication for HIV and malaria because of a lack of primary care capacity.

Given the importance of general practice, then, it is refreshing to read the following studies that have emerged from the productive collaboration of the investigators with general practitioners in Australia. Many pharmaceutical companies, health departments and other interest groups have supported the studies. The sheer diversity of sponsorship, combined with the constancy of the research methods, diminishes the risk of biased results.

The BEACH substudies presented in this report address many aspects of health and health care of patients attending general practice. The data gathering has been appropriately parsimonious and economical of practitioners' time, but within those constraints information is remarkably rich. Whether the point in question is asthma (study 104) or cultural background of patients attending general practice (study 95), each study summary provides clear, concise and helpful insights on which we may base strategies for assisting general practitioners the better to care for their patients or to do other things in the health service that could assist them and their patients. I defy anyone to pick up this volume and find a boring study!

The investigators who have conducted these studies deserve a sustained round of applause. Research of this sort requires strength of vision and great good will. Any research program that has run for over 10 years is truly astonishing and deserves an award for longevity. I also applaud the generosity of the sponsors and research team in making the tested research implements freely available. It is interesting to observe the growth in precision, focus and feasibility that has occurred over the two decades since their first national study in 1990-91

I saw BEACH when it began and it has matured wonderfully. I congratulate the research workers and commend this fine report to all who have an interest in general practice in Australia.

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