

8 Overview of management

8.1 Annual results, 2006–07

The BEACH survey form allowed GPs to record several aspects of patient management for each problem managed at each encounter. Pharmaceutical management is recorded in detail. Other modes of treatment, including clinical treatments (for example counselling) and procedures recorded briefly in the GP's own words, are also related to a single problem. Provision is made on the form for referrals and hospital admissions, and for pathology and imaging test orders, to be related to a single or multiple problems (see Appendix 1).

At the 91,805 recorded encounters, GPs undertook 193,591 management activities in total.

- The most common management form was medication, either prescribed, GP-supplied, or advised for over-the-counter purchase.
- 'Other treatments' were the second most common management activity, with clinical treatments occurring more frequently than procedural treatments (Table 8.1).

For an 'average' 100 GP-patient encounters, GPs provided 83 prescriptions, 30 clinical treatments and 15 procedures, made 8 referrals to specialists and 3 to allied health services, and placed 42 pathology test orders and 9 imaging test orders.

Table 8.1: Summary of management, 2006–07

Management type	Number	Rate per 100 encounters (n = 91,805)	95% LCL	95% UCL	Rate per 100 problems (n = 136,333)	95% LCL	95% UCL
Medications	93,193	101.5	99.2	103.9	68.4	67.0	69.7
Prescribed	76,430	83.3	81.0	85.5	56.1	54.7	57.4
GP-supplied	8,160	8.9	8.2	9.6	6.0	5.5	6.5
Advised OTC	8,604	9.4	8.7	10.1	6.3	5.8	6.8
Other treatments	41,011	44.7	42.3	47.0	30.1	28.6	31.5
Clinical	27,084	29.5	27.6	31.4	19.9	18.7	21.1
Procedural	13,927	15.2	14.4	16.0	10.2	9.7	10.7
Referrals	11,224	12.2	11.7	12.7	8.2	7.9	8.5
Specialist	7,387	8.0	7.7	8.4	5.4	5.2	5.7
Allied health	2,819	3.1	2.9	3.3	2.1	1.9	2.2
Hospital	366	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3
Emergency dept	149	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other medical services	89	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Other referral	413	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3
Pathology	38,963	42.4	40.7	44.2	28.6	27.5	29.6
Imaging	8,229	9.0	8.6	9.3	6.0	5.8	6.3
Other investigations	971	1.1	1.0	1.2	0.7	0.6	0.8
Total management activities	193,591	210.9	—	—	142.0	—	—

Note: LCL—lower confidence limit; UCL—upper confidence limit; OTC—over-the-counter.

Another perspective emerges in analysis of the number of encounters or problems for which at least one form of management was recorded by the GP (Table 8.2). At least one management action was recorded at 90.4% of encounters and for 85.3% of problems managed.

- At least one medication or other treatment was given for nearly three-quarters of the problems managed.
- At least one medication (most commonly prescribed) was prescribed, supplied or advised for more than half the problems managed.
- At least one other treatment (most commonly clinical) was provided for one-quarter of problems managed.
- At least one referral (most commonly to a specialist) was made for 8% of problems managed.
- At least one investigation (most commonly pathology) was requested for 18% of problems managed.

Table 8.2: Encounters and problems for which management was recorded, 2006–07

Management type	Number of encounters	Per cent of total encounters ^(a) (n = 91,805)	Number of problems	Per cent of total problems ^(a) (n = 136,333)
At least one management type	82,983	90.4	116,261	85.3
At least one medication or other treatment	73,396	79.9	97,845	71.8
At least one medication	58,699	63.9	74,288	54.5
At least one prescription	49,700	54.1	62,136	45.6
At least one GP-supplied	6,237	6.8	6,429	4.7
At least one OTC advised	7,680	8.4	7,850	5.8
At least one other treatment	32,423	35.3	36,785	27.0
At least one clinical treatment	21,890	23.8	24,564	18.0
At least one procedural treatment	12,684	13.8	13,141	9.6
At least one referral	10,541	11.5	11,277	8.3
At least one referral to a specialist	7,068	7.7	7,508	5.5
At least one referral to allied health	2,713	3.0	2,831	2.1
At least one referral to hospital	366	0.4	387	0.3
At least one referral to emergency department	149	0.2	152	0.1
At least one referral to other medical services	89	0.1	93	0.1
At least one referral NOS	413	0.4	429	0.3
At least one investigation	21,595	23.5	24,869	18.2
At least one pathology order	15,939	17.4	18,296	13.4
At least one imaging order	7,210	7.9	7,459	5.5
At least one other investigation	929	1.0	945	0.7

(a) Figures will not total 100 as multiple events may occur in one encounter or in the management of one problem at encounter.

Note: OTC—over-the-counter; NOS—not otherwise specified.

The combinations of management types related to each problem were then investigated. The majority of treatments occurred either as a single component or in combination with one other component. Management was provided:

- as a single component for almost two-thirds of the problems managed
- as a double component for 17% of problems managed
- rarely with more than two components.

Table 8.3 lists the most common management combinations. Medication alone was the most common management, followed by the combination of a medication and a clinical treatment. When a problem was referred to another health professional it was most likely that no other treatments were given for the problem at the encounter. This situation also applied to pathology testing.

Table 8.3: Most common management combinations, 2006-07

1+ medication	1+ clinical treatment	1+ procedural treatment	1+ referral	1+ imaging order	1+ pathology order	Per cent of total encounters (n = 91,805)	Per cent of total problems (n = 136,333)
No recorded management						9.6	14.7
1+ management recorded						90.4	85.3
✓						33.4	38.4
✓	✓					9.0	5.5
	✓					6.4	8.7
✓					✓	4.9	3.3
		✓				3.9	4.5
✓		✓				3.9	2.3
			✓			3.4	4.5
					✓	3.3	5.3
✓			✓			2.9	1.4
				✓		1.9	2.3
✓				✓		1.8	1.0
✓	✓				✓	1.5	0.5
		✓			✓	1.2	1.1
	✓				✓	1.2	1.0
✓	✓	✓				0.9	0.2
✓		✓			✓	0.9	0.3
	✓		✓			0.9	0.7
✓	✓		✓			0.9	0.3
				✓	✓	0.7	0.5
	✓	✓				0.5	0.3
✓				✓	✓	0.5	0.2

Note: 1+—at least one specified management type.

8.2 Changes over time, 1998–99 to 2006–07

Since BEACH began in 1998–99 some trends have emerged in the management of patients' problems (Table 8.4). Most noticeably, over the 9 years of the study:

- The rate of medications prescribed, supplied or advised for over-the-counter purchase has significantly decreased, from 109.7 per 100 encounters in 1998–99 to 101.5 per 100 encounters in 2006–07.
- The above reduction is a direct result of a significant decrease in the rate of prescribed medications, from 93.6 per 100 encounters in 1998–99 to 83.3 per 100 in 2006–07.
- An interesting trend was observed in the rate of other treatments, which rose steadily from 43.2 per 100 encounters in 1998–99 to 54.7 per 100 in 2004–05, but then dropped to 43.6 per 100 in 2005–06 and 44.7 per 100 in 2006–07.
- A similar decrease was observed in the rate of clinical treatments. These rose repeatedly over 6 years, from 31.4 per 100 encounters in 1998–99 to 39.2 per 100 in 2004–05, and then decreased sharply to 29.2 per 100 in 2005–06 and 29.5 per 100 in 2006–07.
- There has been an increase in the rate of procedural treatments undertaken in general practice, from 11.8 per 100 encounters in 1998–99 to 15.2 per 100 encounters in 2006–07.
- The rate of referrals has significantly increased, from 11.1 to 12.2 per 100 encounters between 1998–99 and 2006–07.
- The increased referral rate is directly related to a significant increase in the rate of referrals to specialists, from 7.4 per 100 encounters in 1998–99 to 8.0 per 100 in 2006–07.
- Since 2000–01, the rate of pathology tests ordered has significantly increased by 42%, from 29.7 orders per 100 encounters to 42.4 per 100 encounters in 2006–07.
- There has also been a significant increase in the rate of imaging tests ordered, from 7.7 per 100 encounters in 2000–01 to 9.0 per 100 in 2006–07, and in the rate of other investigations, from 0.6 per 100 in 2000–01 to 1.1 per 100 encounters in 2006–07.

Similar changes can be observed in each of these areas, for the percentages of encounters where at least one management type was provided (Table 8.5). This reflects a change in the likelihood of each action when an encounter occurs.

- There was a decrease in the proportion of encounters where at least one management was provided, resulting in an overall reduction from 91.9% in 1998–99 to 90.4% in 2006–07, but this change only became statistically significant in the most recent 12 months. There were years where the proportion was not significantly different from the most recent result, for example 2002–03 (91.3%) and 2003–04 (91.5%).
- There was a significant reduction in the proportion of encounters where at least one medication or other management was provided, from 83.7% in 1998–99 to 79.9% in 2006–07. A major contributor to this reduction was the decrease in the provision of medications, from 68.7% in 1998–99 to 63.9% in 2006–07, particularly prescribed medications, which decreased from 60.1% to 54.1% over this time. The reduction in the proportion of encounters where at least one prescription was given reflects the reduction in the rate of prescribed medications reported above and shown in Table 8.4.
- While there was an overall decrease in the proportion of encounters where at least one medication was recorded and the proportion where at least one medication was prescribed, there was an increase in the proportion of encounters where at least one GP-supplied medication was reported, from 5.6% in 1998–99 to 6.8% in 2006–07.

- As with the rate of other treatments and clinical treatments, which increased over 6 years and then suddenly decreased in 2005–06 and 2006–07, the proportion of encounters with at least one other (non-pharmacological) treatment and at least one clinical treatment also followed the same pattern. The likelihood of other treatments increased from 34.5% of encounters in 1998–99 to 41.2% in 2004–05 and then decreased in 2005–06 to 35.1% and to 35.3% in 2006–07. For clinical treatments, the proportion increased from 25.5% in 1998–99 to 30.5% in 2004–05 and then decreased to 24.0% and 23.8% in 2005–06 and 2006–07 respectively.
- Unlike the rates or likelihood of clinical or other treatments, the likelihood of encounters with at least one procedural treatment being provided at the encounter continually and significantly increased from 10.8% in 1998–99 to 13.8% in 2006–07.
- There was an increasing trend that reached marginal statistical significance (confidence intervals touched but did not overlap) in the likelihood of referral at the encounters (from 10.6% in 1998–99 to 11.5% in 2006–07), particularly in referrals to specialists (from 7.1% in 1998–99 to 7.7% in 2006–07) and referrals to emergency departments. There was a significant increase in the likelihood of the patient receiving ‘other’ referrals (including referrals to other medical services). In contrast, the proportion of encounters with at least one referral to hospital decreased significantly, from 0.7% in 1998–99 to 0.4% in 2006–07.
- Reflecting the increase in the rates of pathology and imaging tests ordered per 100 encounters shown in Table 8.4, there was an increase in the likelihood of the GP ordering at least one investigation, from 18.1% in 1998–99 to 23.5% in 2006–07. In 1998–99 the proportion of encounters where at least one pathology test was ordered was 13.2%, and the proportion with at least one imaging test order was 6.3%. By 2006–07 these proportions had significantly increased to 17.4% and 7.9% respectively.

Table 8.4: Summary of management, summary of annual results, BEACH, 1998–99 to 2006–07

	Rate per 100 encounters (95% CI)									Change ^(a)	
	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	↑ ↓	('000)
	(n = 96,901)	(n = 104,856)	(n = 99,307)	(n = 96,973)	(n = 100,987)	(n = 98,877)	(n = 94,386)	(n = 101,993)	(n = 91,805)		
Medications	109.7 (107.4–112.0)	110.1 (107.8–112.4)	108.2 (105.7–110.6)	104.5 (102.2–106.9)	103.8 (101.4–106.2)	104.4 (102.1–106.7)	101.5 (99.3–103.8)	104.4 (101.8–107.0)	101.5 (99.2–103.9)	↓	–9,200
Prescribed	93.6 (91.2–96.1)	93.8 (91.5–96.2)	92.3 (89.9–94.7)	88.0 (85.6–90.4)	84.3 (81.8–86.9)	86.0 (83.6–88.5)	83.4 (81.2–85.5)	85.8 (83.3–88.4)	83.3 (81.0–85.5)	↓	–11,240
GP-supplied	7.3 (6.5–8.1)	6.9 (5.8–7.9)	6.9 (5.7–8.1)	7.6 (6.3–9.0)	9.3 (7.6–11.0)	8.6 (7.4–9.8)	8.1 (7.3–8.9)	8.8 (8.2–9.5)	8.9 (8.2–9.6)	↑	+1,590
Advised OTC	8.8 (8.1–9.5)	9.4 (8.6–10.2)	9.0 (8.1–9.8)	8.9 (8.1–9.6)	10.2 (9.2–11.1)	9.8 (9.0–10.6)	10.1 (9.1–11.0)	9.8 (9.0–10.5)	9.4 (8.7–10.1)	—	—
Other treatments	43.2 (41.3–45.1)	46.0 (44.1–47.8)	49.4 (47.1–51.7)	51.9 (49.6–54.2)	51.8 (49.3–54.3)	51.4 (48.9–53.8)	54.7 (52.1–57.3)	43.6 (41.5–45.8)	44.7 (42.3–47.0)	§	—
Clinical	31.4 (29.7–33.0)	33.5 (31.8–35.2)	37.2 (35.1–39.3)	38.1 (36.1–40.1)	37.2 (35.0–39.4)	36.6 (34.5–38.8)	39.2 (37.1–41.4)	29.2 (27.3–31.1)	29.5 (27.6–31.4)	§	—
Procedural	11.8 (11.2–12.5)	12.5 (11.9–13.0)	12.2 (11.6–12.8)	13.8 (13.1–14.5)	14.6 (13.9–15.3)	14.7 (14.0–15.5)	15.5 (14.6–16.4)	14.4 (13.7–15.1)	15.2 (14.4–16.0)	↑	+3,410
Referrals	11.1 (10.7–11.6)	11.1 (10.7–11.6)	10.4 (10.0–10.8)	10.5 (10.1–10.9)	11.1 (10.7–11.6)	11.6 (11.1–12.1)	11.5 (11.1–12.0)	12.0 (11.5–12.5)	12.2 (11.7–12.7)	↑	+1,050
Specialist	7.4 (7.1–7.7)	7.2 (6.9–7.5)	7.4 (7.0–7.7)	7.3 (7.0–7.6)	7.7 (7.3–8.0)	7.9 (7.5–8.2)	7.7 (7.4–8.0)	8.2 (7.8–8.5)	8.0 (7.7–8.4)	↑	+570
Allied health service	3.0 (2.8–3.2)	3.1 (2.9–3.3)	2.3 (2.2–2.5)	2.3 (2.1–2.4)	2.5 (2.3–2.7)	2.6 (2.4–2.8)	2.7 (2.5–2.9)	2.9 (2.7–3.1)	3.1 (2.9–3.3)	—	—
Hospital	0.7 (0.6–0.8)	0.7 (0.6–0.8)	0.5 (0.4–0.6)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.6 (0.5–0.6)	0.6 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.4–0.5)	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.4 (0.3–0.5)	↓	–310
Emergency department	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.2)	0.1 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	↑	+100
Other referrals/other medical services ^(b)	0.0 [†] (0.0–0.0)	0.0 [†] (0.0–0.0)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	↑	+510

(continued)

Table 8.4 (continued): Summary of management, summary of annual results, BEACH, 1998–99 to 2006–07

	Rate per 100 encounters (95% CI)									Change ^(a)	
	1998–99 (n = 96,901)	1999–00 (n = 104,856)	2000–01 (n = 99,307)	2001–02 (n = 96,973)	2002–03 (n = 100,987)	2003–04 (n = 98,877)	2004–05 (n = 94,386)	2005–06 (n = 101,993)	2006–07 (n = 91,805)	↑ ↓	('000)
Pathology ^(c)	NAv	NAv	29.7 (28.4–30.9)	31.0 (29.7–32.4)	32.9 (31.5–34.4)	35.2 (33.7–36.7)	36.7 (35.2–38.2)	38.6 (36.9–40.3)	42.4 (40.7–44.2)	↑	+13,530
Imaging ^(c)	NAv	NAv	7.7 (7.3–8.0)	7.9 (7.6–8.2)	8.6 (8.2–9.0)	8.2 (7.8–8.6)	8.3 (8.0–8.6)	8.8 (8.4–9.2)	9.0 (8.6–9.3)	↑	+1,460
Other investigations ^(c)	NAv	NAv	0.6 (0.5–0.7)	0.9 (0.8–1.0)	1.0 (0.8–1.2)	1.0 (0.9–1.2)	1.1 (0.9–1.3)	1.0 (0.9–1.1)	1.1 (1.0–1.2)	↑	+520

(a) The direction and type of change is indicated for each variable: ↑/↓ indicates a statistically significant change, ↑/↓ indicates a marginal change, § indicates a non-linear significant or marginal change, and — indicates there was no change. Statistically significant linear changes have been extrapolated to estimate the national average annual change and are reported in thousands in the far right column.

(b) Other referrals and other medical services have been grouped for comparability. In the first 2 years 'other medical services' and 'other referrals' were grouped and reported together.

(c) In the third year of BEACH the data collection and data coding system for pathology, imaging and other investigations changed. Data from 1998–99 and 1999–00 are not comparable to those from 2000–01 onward.

† Rates are reported to one decimal place. This indicates that the rate is < 0.05 per 100 encounters.

Note: CI—confidence interval; NAv—not available; OTC—over-the-counter.

Table 8.5: Encounters and problems for which at least one management was recorded

At least one...	Per cent of encounters ^(a) (95% CI)									Change ^(b)	
	1998–99 (n = 96,901)	1999–00 (n = 104,856)	2000–01 (n = 99,307)	2001–02 (n = 96,973)	2002–03 (n = 100,987)	2003–04 (n = 98,877)	2004–05 (n = 94,386)	2005–06 (n = 101,993)	2006–07 (n = 91,805)	↑ ↓	('000)
Management type	91.9 (91.5–92.4)	92.2 (91.7–92.7)	91.6 (91.0–92.2)	91.8 (91.3–92.3)	91.3 (90.6–92.0)	91.5 (90.9–92.0)	91.9 (91.3–92.5)	91.2 (90.6–91.8)	90.4 (89.8–91.0)	↓	-2,190
Medication or other treatment	83.7 (83.1–84.3)	83.8 (83.1–84.5)	83.5 (82.7–84.2)	83.2 (82.5–84.0)	82.5 (81.6–83.3)	82.3 (81.5–83.1)	82.4 (81.6–83.2)	81.4 (80.6–82.1)	79.9 (79.1–80.8)	↓	-4,490
Medication	68.7 (67.9–69.5)	68.5 (67.6–69.3)	68.0 (67.1–68.9)	66.6 (65.7–67.5)	65.8 (64.9–66.8)	65.6 (64.7–66.5)	64.3 (63.4–65.2)	65.2 (64.3–66.2)	63.9 (63.0–64.9)	↓	-5,420
Prescription	60.1 (59.1–61.1)	60.1 (59.1–61.1)	59.8 (58.7–60.8)	57.4 (56.4–58.5)	54.9 (53.7–56.1)	55.7 (54.6–56.9)	54.8 (53.8–55.8)	55.6 (54.5–56.6)	54.1 (53.2–55.1)	↓	-6,590
GP-supplied	5.6 (5.0–6.2)	5.1 (4.5–5.6)	5.1 (4.5–5.7)	5.8 (5.1–6.5)	6.8 (6.0–7.7)	6.5 (5.8–7.3)	6.2 (5.7–6.7)	6.4 (6.0–6.9)	6.8 (6.3–7.3)	↑	+1,190
OTC advised	7.9 (7.3–8.5)	8.3 (7.7–8.9)	8.0 (7.3–8.6)	8.0 (7.4–8.6)	9.0 (8.3–9.8)	8.7 (8.0–9.3)	8.7 (8.1–9.4)	8.6 (8.0–9.2)	8.4 (7.8–8.9)	—	—
Other treatment	34.5 (33.2–35.7)	36.2 (35.0–37.4)	37.6 (36.2–39.1)	39.5 (38.1–41.0)	39.4 (37.8–40.9)	39.3 (37.8–40.8)	41.2 (39.7–42.8)	35.1 (33.7–36.6)	35.3 (33.8–36.9)	§	—
Clinical treatment	25.5 (24.4–26.7)	27.0 (25.8–28.2)	29.0 (27.6–30.3)	29.7 (28.4–31.1)	29.2 (27.7–30.6)	28.9 (27.4–30.3)	30.5 (29.1–32.0)	24.0 (22.7–25.4)	23.8 (22.5–25.2)	§	—
Procedural treatment	10.8 (10.3–11.3)	11.4 (11.0–11.9)	11.1 (10.6–11.7)	12.7 (12.0–13.3)	13.2 (12.6–13.8)	13.3 (12.7–13.9)	13.8 (13.1–14.6)	13.2 (12.6–13.8)	13.8 (13.2–14.5)	↑	+3,010
Referral	10.6 (10.2–11.0)	10.4 (10.0–10.8)	9.9 (9.6–10.3)	10.0 (9.6–10.4)	10.6 (10.2–11.0)	11.0 (10.5–11.5)	10.9 (10.5–11.3)	11.3 (10.9–11.8)	11.5 (11.0–11.9)	↑	+850
Specialist	7.1 (6.8–7.4)	6.9 (6.6–7.2)	7.1 (6.8–7.4)	7.0 (6.7–7.3)	7.4 (7.0–7.7)	7.6 (7.3–8.0)	7.5 (7.2–7.8)	7.9 (7.5–8.2)	7.7 (7.4–8.0)	↑	+570
Allied health	2.9 (2.8–3.1)	3.0 (2.8–3.2)	2.3 (2.1–2.4)	2.2 (2.1–2.4)	2.4 (2.2–2.6)	2.5 (2.3–2.7)	2.6 (2.5–2.8)	2.8 (2.6–3.0)	3.0 (2.8–3.1)	—	—
Hospital	0.7 (0.6–0.8)	0.7 (0.6–0.8)	0.5 (0.4–0.6)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.6 (0.5–0.6)	0.6 (0.5–0.6)	0.5 (0.4–0.5)	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.4 (0.3–0.5)	↓	-310

(continued)

Table 8.5 (continued): Encounters and problems for which at least one management was recorded

At least one...	Per cent of encounters ^(a) (95% CI)									Change ^(b)	
	1998–99 (n = 96,901)	1999–00 (n = 104,856)	2000–01 (n = 99,307)	2001–02 (n = 96,973)	2002–03 (n = 100,987)	2003–04 (n = 98,877)	2004–05 (n = 94,386)	2005–06 (n = 101,993)	2006–07 (n = 91,805)	↑ ↓	('000)
Emergency department	0.1 (0.0–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.1)	0.1 (0.1–0.2)	0.1 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.2 (0.2–0.2)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	↑	+100
Other referral/other medical service ^(c)	0.0 [‡] (0.0–0.0)	0.0 [‡] (0.0–0.0)	0.2 (0.1–0.2)	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.3 (0.2–0.3)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.4 (0.4–0.5)	0.4 (0.3–0.4)	0.5 (0.5–0.6)	↑	+510
Investigation	18.1 (17.5–18.7)	18.9 (18.3–19.5)	19.3 (18.7–19.9)	19.7 (19.1–20.3)	20.8 (20.2–21.5)	21.3 (20.7–22.0)	21.8 (21.1–22.4)	22.6 (21.9–23.3)	23.5 (22.8–24.2)	↑	+5,420
Pathology order ^(d)	13.2 (12.8–13.7)	13.8 (13.3–14.3)	13.8 (13.3–14.3)	14.0 (13.5–14.5)	14.7 (14.2–15.3)	15.5 (14.9–16.1)	15.7 (15.2–16.3)	16.4 (15.8–16.9)	17.4 (16.8–18.0)	↑	+4,230
Imaging order ^(d)	6.3 (6.0–6.6)	6.7 (6.4–7.0)	7.2 (6.9–7.5)	6.9 (6.6–7.2)	7.5 (7.1–7.8)	7.2 (6.9–7.5)	7.3 (7.0–7.6)	7.8 (7.4–8.1)	7.9 (7.6–8.2)	↑	+1,600
Other investigation ^(d)	NAv	NAv	0.6 (0.5–0.7)	0.9 (0.8–1.0)	1.0 (0.9–1.1)	1.0 (0.9–1.1)	1.0 (0.9–1.1)	1.0 (0.9–1.1)	1.0 (0.9–1.1)	↑	+410

(a) Figures will not total 100 as multiple events may occur in one encounter or in the management of one problem at encounter.

(b) The direction and type of change is indicated for each variable: ↑/↓ indicates a statistically significant change, ↑/↓ indicates a marginal change, § indicates a non-linear significant or marginal change, and — indicates there was no change. Statistically significant linear changes have been extrapolated to estimate the national average annual change and are reported in thousands in the far right column.

(c) Other referrals and other medical services have been grouped for comparability. In the first 2 years 'other medical services' and 'other referrals' were grouped and reported together.

(d) While the coding system for pathology and imaging changed in the third year of BEACH, the presence or absence of a test at the encounter was still recorded. These figures are therefore comparable with data from subsequent years.

‡ Rates are reported to one decimal place. This indicates that the rate is < 0.05 per 100 encounters.

Note: Encs—encounters; probs—problems; OTC—over-the-counter; NAv—not available.