



Your Health and Wellness: Osteoporosis



Osteoporosis is a systemic skeletal disease characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue, resulting in a compromised bone strength and heightened susceptibility to fracture.

Fractures are an important cause of disability among postmenopausal women, and the cost of medical care associated with osteoporosis are estimated to be more than \$18 billion annually in the U.S. alone.

Bisphosphonates, the most commonly used treatment for established osteoporosis, inhibits osteoclast-mediated bone resorption and reduce the risk of vertebral fracture. Two bisphosphonates, alendronate and risedronate, also have been shown to reduce nonvertebral and hip fractures in women with osteoporosis. However, adherence to oral

treatment is problematic, and about half of patients for whom oral treatment is prescribed do not adhere to it after one year! Poor adherence has been shown to compromise the effectiveness of treatment against fracture and to increase the cost of medical care.

There is a new agent on the market that has a significant impact in reducing fracture risk in postmenopausal women with osteoporosis. Researchers recently completed a three year double blind multi-center trial involving over 7,700 women that assessed the impact of a yearly infusion of IV Zoledronic acid in postmenopausal women with osteoporosis. The study, which was recently published in the New England Journal Of Medicine, found that the yearly infusion reduced the risk of morphometric vertebral fracture by 70% and reduced the risk of hip fracture by 41%. Based on the results of this study, (Zoledronic Acid) is an extremely viable option for the treatment of our patients with osteoporosis. The intravenous option is especially attractive for those who have gastrointestinal issues or compliance issues with the traditional oral bisphosphonates. Those experiencing cognitive decline could especially benefit because they are often frail, older women with a high risk of falls and related hip fractures.

Currently in progress with the guidance of Dr. Mark McConn and Dr. Susan Merola-McConn are specific protocols and guidelines with regards to administration and reimbursement. I am very enthusiastic to be part of this service to our patients at North Medical Family Physicians. Cutting-edge medical care of course is everyone's desired goal and I am sure numerous deserving patients will benefit from this new option available today.

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