



Bone Up on Osteoporosis

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An increase in patients concerned with osteoporosis or bone loss may be because the multi-billion-dollar estrogen-alternative industry has raised awareness with "widespread ads and slick campaigns," as reported in the July 27 *Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* (page D5). The number of medical doctor visits for osteoporosis was 1.3 million in 1994, but is now 6.3 million last year.


A study by Stanford University researchers reported that the number of Americans diagnosed with osteoporosis increased from 500,000 in 1994 to 3.6 million in 2003, which coincided with the introduction of new drugs, such as Fosamax, Evista, and Actonel, to treat this bone-loss condition. The researchers said that the ad campaign may have helped increase the diagnosis rates.

These drugs are alternatives for estrogen, which doctors have not been readily prescribing because of its links to health problems such as breast cancer. The study reported that the estrogen prescriptions fell to 3% in 2003 from 35% in 1998 for osteoporosis.

But Ethel Siris, head of the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF), said in the article that this disease still remains "underdiagnosed and undertreated." On the NOF Web site (www.nof.org/prevention/index.htm), it claims there is no cure for osteoporosis, but that bone loss is largely preventable.

So what role can you play in helping patients understand and prevent this disease without taking drugs? According to Lisa Bloom, DC, it is important for that all DCs need to understand this disease because of the different adjustment techniques used (see full story on page 12).

Also, DCs can be the bone-health source whom patients can turn to. Use the increased awareness from the estrogen-alternative drug companies advertising campaign to your advantage by holding osteoporosis prevention wellness seminars to educate your patients about the alternative, drugless therapy—chiropractic and nutrition. Include brochures and handouts about diet, supplements, exercise, and the harm in smoking and excessive amounts of alcohol in their initial examination take-home packets. Also, you can offer calcium and vitamin D supplements in your office for immediate purchase.

Become the bone-health doctor in your community and create a unique niche in your practice. 

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