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Few Older Women With Hip Fractures Receive Osteoporosis Care

Elderly women at highest risk are not receiving recommended care after hip fractures

WASHINGTON, DC — Fewer than 1 in 5 older women who break their hip have at least one of the recommended osteoporosis screening tests or treatments within six months, according to a new **AARP Public Policy Institute (PPI) study**. Women ages 80 and older who break a bone are the least likely age group to be screened for osteoporosis or to begin using drug therapy, and had a significantly higher risk of a second hip fracture than those who did receive the recommended services.

“Our study suggests that surprisingly few women are evaluated or treated for osteoporosis following hip fractures,” said **PPI Vice President of Health Security Lina Walker, Ph.D.** “Addressing these missed opportunities would likely make a big difference in the survival rate and the quality of life for older women who break a hip.”

Osteoporosis affects more than 5.8 million women ages 50 and older in the U.S. Roughly half of all postmenopausal women will have an osteoporosis-related bone fracture during their lifetime. Hip fractures, particularly common among older adults, are often associated with serious health implications: 10–20% of older women will die in the year after a hip fracture, and just 40% will return to their prior level of independence.

Study Highlights

- Only 17% of women age 50+ had at least one of the recommended osteoporosis-related health services within six months of their hip fracture: 13% underwent bone density testing and 7% started using osteoporosis drug therapy (a small percentage did both).
- Just 23% of women age 50+ were evaluated or treated for osteoporosis within the first year following their hip fracture.
- Women ages 80+ were 34% less likely than those ages 50–79 to use the recommended services in a timely manner.
- Women ages 80+ who did not have bone density testing or begin taking osteoporosis drugs within six months of their first fracture were 62% more likely to experience a second hip fracture compared with those in their age group who did receive recommended services in a timely manner.

Research has clearly shown the benefits of treatment for women with osteoporosis. Experts suggest that older women with hip fractures have bone density testing to evaluate whether osteoporosis may have played a role, and begin using osteoporosis drugs, if appropriate. “Our study confirms prior research suggesting that few women are being evaluated or treated for osteoporosis following a hip fracture and are vulnerable to potentially preventable future bone fractures,” said Walker.

About the Study

Methodology: AARP Public Policy Institute examined the use of recommended bone density testing and drug treatment within six months of a hip fracture and risk of fracture recurrence using data from the **OptumLabs™ Data Warehouse**, a database of de-identified claims from a large national health insurance carrier. PPI assessed post-fracture care among all study-eligible women ages 50 and older who had a hip fracture between 2008 and 2013. Nearly 55% of the study population was at least 80 years old.

The study can be found here: www.aarp.org/hipfracturestudy

Additional Resources

- <http://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2015/boost-bone-health.html>

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About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into 'Real Possibilities' by changing the way America defines aging. With staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and promote the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare security, financial security and personal fulfillment. AARP also advocates for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and

information, AARP produces the world's largest circulation magazine, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @aarp and our CEO @JoAnn_Jenkins on Twitter.

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