

CHALLENGES IN EMPOWERMENT OF POST-MENOPAUSAL WOMEN IN PREVENTING FRAGILITY FRACTURES. A MALAYSIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction: The incidence of osteoporosis is continuing to escalate with the increasingly elderly population. Like most other Asian countries, Malaysia has a high prevalence of osteoporosis and its incidence will almost certainly increase together with Asia's rapid growth in its aging population. A similar increment pattern was also reported in the incidence of related fragility fractures. Despite the significant developments in the pharmacotherapy of osteoporosis and post-menopausal complications, the risk of fragility fractures is by far not being eliminated and there are still unmet needs, requiring a broader range of preventive management steps.

Methodology: A systemic literature search was carried out with the use of specific keywords or phrases such as osteoporosis, fragility fracture, and/ or prevention of osteoporosis, particularly related to postmenopausal women (PMW) among Malaysians.

Discussion: Studies highlighted several common challenges in preventing osteoporosis and fragility fractures among PMW. These include early diagnosis and prevention of osteoporosis, identification of risk factors of fragility fracture, limited education resources material that suit and tailor-made for Malaysian PMW, and limited utilization of home-based care in the management and prevention. Poor knowledge among PMW on osteoporosis, prevention, and risk prevention was also high. Some of the literature also found a lack of knowledge on osteoporosis among healthcare professionals. Additionally, PMWs were found to neglect the consumption of calcium in daily nutritional intakes. The majority only began incorporating milk into their diet within the past few years after they were informed of the impact of the diet on osteoporosis, while others reported that they never consumed milk.

Conclusion: By understanding the needs of PMW based on a specific population, a better interprofessional collaboration between healthcare professionals and non-governmental services can be structurally planned. It is imperative to develop an effective educational program in order to make an impact on practice.