

Is Osteoporosis Under Treated?

Fen Lee Hew

Consultant Endocrinologist

Subang Jaya Medical Centre, Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Osteoporosis is a chronic progressive disease leads to reduce bone density and quality thus compromising bone strength. The clinical end point is fracture and this leads to significant morbidity and premature mortality. The most common fractures seen with osteoporotic low trauma fractures are wrist, spine and hip. Identifying and treating patients with osteoporosis appropriately leads to improved bone quality and more importantly reduce the incidence of fracture.

Like any medical treatment, drugs for treatment of osteoporosis do have side effects and this has been over exaggerated in not only the medical but also public domain. A careful and objective evidence based assessment of the risk benefit ratio should lead to future fracture reduction and consequently morbidity and mortality.

The clinical reality in Malaysia is reflected in the dropping usage of drugs for osteoporosis treatment. This is coupled with some clinical apathy in not treating the high risk patients who were admitted with fractures. This is in the background of the changing demographic in the Malaysian's aging population.

More conscious effort is needed to identify patients at risk. Quite apart from public education, the medical professions need to be more proactive in identifying those at risk of fracture. Fracture liaison service, proactive identification of patients at risk will assist this process.