OSTEOPOROSIS IS A MAJOR THREAT TO WOMEN AND THEIR FUTURE INDEPENDENCE, NEW REPORT WARNS

‘Bone care for the postmenopausal woman’ released for World Osteoporosis Day shows urgent action must be taken to safeguard the quality of life of future generations

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Dubai, United Arab Emirates (October 10, 2013) - According to a new report published today by the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF), women may expect to live longer but their quality of life will be seriously jeopardized if action to protect their bone health is not taken. Postmenopausal women are the most vulnerable to osteoporosis and fractures. Worldwide, an estimated 200 million women are affected and data from the Middle East show that the number of hip fractures is projected to quadruple by 2050 in some countries.

With an increasingly ageing population huge demands will be put on health care systems and on those professionals who provide care within them. In the Middle East, a predicted demographic explosion in the number of people aged over 50 will take place in the coming decades. By 2020 it is expected that 25 per cent of the population will be aged over 50 and by 2050 this will rise to 40 per cent. Health care budgets will have to cope with the tsunami of need fueled by age-related chronic diseases in the baby-boomer generation.

Older people who suffer hip fractures are often faced with long-term disability that results in loss of independence and higher risk of death. Mortality rates after hip fracture may be 2-2.5 fold higher in certain populations within the Middle East and Africa region when compared to Western populations where rates are between 25-35 per cent.

Professor John A. Kanis, President, IOF urged, “The time to act is now, those of us working in the non-communicable disease (NCD) community congratulated governments for their commitment to reduce the NCD burden by 25 per cent by 2025, at the World Health Assembly in 2012. As advocates for bone, muscle and joint health we have identified cost-effective evidence-based solutions that can be implemented immediately, which will not only save lives but reduce health care costs, and ultimately help governments reach this target.”

The report ‘Bone care for the postmenopausal woman’ provides solutions for fracture prevention and management. Given that women over the age of 50 play a critical role as caregivers and breadwinners within the family and society their bone health is a priority to safeguard future generations. For example, in the US, 43 per cent of caregivers are women aged 50 or over; in Spain 70 per cent of women aged over 65 care for their grandchildren, many every day. In Lebanon, although labor force participation among the older female population (> 65 years) is relatively low (2.8%), their principal occupation is nevertheless often that of a caregiver to another family member, older spouses, older parents, or grandchildren.
Around the world it is women over 50 who most often take on the burden of care for elderly parents and disabled or sick family members.

“Although the earlier prevention begins the better, when a women reaches menopause she must not delay any longer. Menopause is the critical time to take preventive measures against bone loss and muscle weakness that can lead to osteoporosis, falls and fractures,” said report co-author Professor Ghada El-Hajj Fuleihan, Professor of Medicine, Director of the Calcium Metabolism and Osteoporosis Program & Director WHO Collaborating Center for Metabolic Bone Disorders, American University of Beirut Medical Center, Beirut, Lebanon.

Fractures can exact a terrible toll on quality of life, and in women over 45 they account for more days spent in hospital than many other diseases, including diabetes, heart attack, and breast cancer.

Secondary fracture prevention is also an important message of the report. “An individual who has experienced a fracture is at double the risk of suffering a second fracture as compared to a person without fractures. In postmenopausal women, a broken wrist or a spinal fracture is often the harbinger of more fractures to come and should be taken as a warning that testing and preventive treatment is needed. Given that 20 per cent of those who suffer a hip fracture die within one year, it is not only unacceptable but unjust not to take action to change this,” said Professor Cyrus Cooper, Chair, IOF Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Bone care for the postmenopausal woman, translated into seven languages, has been launched by IOF in the lead up to World Osteoporosis Day an occasion marked on October 20th every year (www.worldosteoporosisday.org). More than 200 patient and medical societies will be spreading the message of osteoporosis prevention in numerous events and campaigns in all regions of the world.

Notes to Editors

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About World Osteoporosis Day
World Osteoporosis Day is observed annually on 20 October, and marks the beginning of a year-long campaign dedicated to raising global awareness of the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis and related musculoskeletal diseases. Led by the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF), it generates worldwide media and assists with public awareness campaigns organized by national osteoporosis patient societies from around the world with activities in over 90 countries. www.worldosteoporosisday.org; www.facebook.com/worldosteoporosisday; #womenofsteel

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About IOF
The International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) is the world’s largest nongovernmental organization dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis and related musculoskeletal diseases. IOF members, including committees of scientific researchers, leading companies, as well as more than 200 patient, medical and research societies, work together to make bone, joint and muscle health a worldwide health care priority. www.iofbonehealth.org; www.facebook.com/iofbonehealth; www.twitter.com/iofbonehealth