

## Call to Action

# HCPs: Are you confident that your patients at risk of fracture are being identified and receiving appropriate care?

If not, you need to ensure current guidelines are being followed and deliver an effective service to your at-risk patients.

### Why is this important?

Osteoporosis affects over two million women in the UK<sup>1</sup> but it is currently under-diagnosed and under-treated. Every year, 300,000 people in the UK suffer a fragility fracture,<sup>2</sup> including 76,000 hip fractures<sup>3</sup> and as the population ages, this will increase.

Fractures cause significant pain, disability and loss of independence for patients and in many cases can be fatal – 1,150 people die every month in the UK following a hip fracture.<sup>4</sup>

Currently, one third of women who have osteoporosis are undiagnosed.<sup>5</sup> Treating osteoporosis in women who have had previous fractures can reduce the risk of future fractures by 50%<sup>6</sup> yet, even after a fracture, the majority of women receive no treatment for their osteoporosis.<sup>7</sup>

As with all chronic conditions compliance is also an issue, particularly among patients taking oral bisphosphonates, currently recommended as first line treatment by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) – in fact 68% of patients discontinue their medication within 12 months.<sup>8</sup> Without effective treatment, patients are at increased risk of fracture.

### What can be done?

Several guidelines have been developed for the treatment of osteoporosis and the recommendations include:

- Women with a prior fragility fracture should be considered for treatment and should have a DXA scan

- Clinical risk factors can also be assessed using the FRAX™ tool
- Where appropriate, ensure suitable treatment is prescribed and that the patient complies with treatment

Co-ordinated services between primary and secondary care are essential. The Fracture Liaison Service (FLS) is designed to provide an integrated approach to the management and prevention of fractures.<sup>9</sup> This approach has been widely endorsed as best practice for secondary fracture prevention and is recommended in the Department of Health's *Prevention Package for Older People*.<sup>5</sup>

### What can you do?

- Ensure systems are in place to identify patients at risk of fracture in line with current guidance
- Inform patients of the importance of continuing with treatment for a long-term condition like osteoporosis and follow up with them to ensure treatment compliance
- Find out if there is an integrated approach, such as a FLS, for the management of falls and fractures in your area and utilise this resource

If you would like further information about osteoporosis or the FLS approach, please visit the National Osteoporosis Society (NOS) Fighting for Fracture Liaison Services Campaign web page at [www.nos.org.uk](http://www.nos.org.uk).

#### References

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