



World Osteoporosis Day – October 20th

Osteoporosis Remains Significantly Undertreated in Latin America Where Burden of Disease is Substantial and Expected to Skyrocket as the Population Ages

- Expert panel highlights burden of osteoporosis and potential solutions for improving care in the region
- Americas Health Foundation supports publication of consensus statement in *Archives of Osteoporosis* on Osteoporosis Prevention and Treatment in Latin America

WASHINGTON, DC – October 15, 2018 ---- The Americas Health Foundation (AHF) announces the publication of a consensus statement produced by an expert panel on osteoporosis. The panel concludes that osteoporosis should be considered a public health priority in Latin America given its enormous health impact on patients and financial impact on health care systems and the economy. The article, “Consensus statement: osteoporosis prevention and treatment in Latin America—current structure and future directions,” currently available online and to be published in the December 2018 issue of *Archives of Osteoporosis*, includes recommendations for improving prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis in Latin America.

“The burden of osteoporosis is going to skyrocket in Latin America over the next 30 years and current approaches to care are inadequate,” said Dr. Osvaldo Daniel Messina, corresponding author on the paper and rheumatologist at Cosme Argerich Hospital and IRO Clinical Research Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina. “We have outlined practical strategies to improve diagnosis and treatment and prevent unnecessary fractures due to this prevalent disease that is becoming more frequent.”

According to the expert panel, the burden of osteoporosis in Latin America is substantial and likely to grow significantly as the population ages. Hip fracture rates in women age 50 years and older range from 53 to 443 per 100,000 people, and from 27 to 135 per 100,000 people for men age 50 years and older. In Mexico and Brazil, the number of hip fractures per year is expected to reach around 160,000 in each country by 2050.

Care for fractures due to osteoporosis is also extremely costly in Latin America. The direct cost of hip fracture ranges from \$3,100 to \$12,000 USD per patient across the Region. “Mexico spent \$480 million USD on non-pharmacologic treatment for the most common fractures related to osteoporosis or osteopenia (low bone mass) in 2010, and this cost is projected to grow by 42 percent in 2020,” said Dr. Patricia Clark, co-author and Head of the Clinical Epidemiology Unit at the HIMFG-Faculty of Medicine UNAM.

“Despite the importance of effective treatment for preventing fractures, osteoporosis remains undertreated in Latin America, where health systems are fragmented and lack coordination within countries,” added Dr. Monique Chalem, co-author and Rheumatologist at the Fundación Santafe in Bogotá, Colombia. Nearly one quarter of the population does not seek care for

osteoporosis due to geographical barriers. In addition, although inexpensive pharmacologic treatments are available, patients may encounter access issues for more specialized treatments that are medically indicated depending on their insurance coverage.

The published consensus statement offers recommendations in several key areas – including clinical guidelines, diagnosis, treatment, and health programs – that could help prevent fractures and improve the health of people with osteoporosis across the Region. Health policy makers, insurance providers (both public and private), medical societies, employer organizations, hospitals, long-term care facilities, patients and the general public are called upon to help reduce the burden of this disease in Latin America.

“Treatment inertia of this disease is unacceptable,” said Dr. Ben Hur Albergaria co-author and Professor of Medicine at the Federal University of Espirito Santo in Brazil. “Health systems need to take real and decisive action now to reduce the unnecessary costs and impacts to patients’ lives caused by this treatable disease. Health professionals, policy makers and government should consider taking steps as proposed in this paper to address this unmet medical need.”

“The findings of this consensus statement underscore the urgency of addressing osteoporosis in a comprehensive manner in Latin America’s aging population,” said Richard Salvatierra, AHF President. “We are pleased with the work of this independent panel and find such consensus statements serve as an effective tool to impact health policy in the Region. We are committed to working with diverse stakeholders to make osteoporosis prevention, diagnosis and treatment a health care priority across the region.”

The organization and implementation of the consensus conference was carried out by AHF, an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to improving health care throughout the Latin American region. It was supported by an unrestricted grant from Amgen.

About Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a systemic skeletal disease that is characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue, with a consequent increase in bone fragility and susceptibility to fracture. Fragility fractures are the most serious consequence of osteoporosis, imposing a risk for loss of independence, chronic pain, the need for rehabilitation, and excess mortality. Osteoporosis imposes a very high burden on individuals, economies and health systems worldwide. The global economic burden of osteoporosis is expected to rise to about USD\$132 billion by 2050.

About AHF

AHF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. whose mission is to advance public health in the Americas and improve the well being of its people by working with strategic partners in developing health education, disease prevention and training initiatives. AHF focuses on improving health and access to care in a number of priority areas, including chronic diseases, oncology, vaccines, and biosimilars.

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