

G-5 – Cheng Po Wa, Rena – Ming Pao - China

D7 Health Feature 04-10-04

Two of the seven beauty queens shown on the photo below might suffer bone fractures as the result of brittle bones at the age of 50 or above. This is not an exaggeration meant to scare people: One in three women at the age of 50 and will suffer bone fractures as a result of osteoporosis; and in fact, among the friends of the seven beauties, there already are cases of osteoporosis now. If you do not want to be that “one out of three”, you must become active now.

Text: Zheng (illegible)hua

Pictures: Zheng (illegible)hua, International Osteoporosis Foundation Website

Seven beauty queens from different decades gathered in Bangkok on the occasion of “Beauties and the Bones”, an event organized by International Osteoporosis Foundation – IOF. National IOF chairman Professor Helmut Minne stated that the ageing of society brought about changes to our lifestyle, and that the rate of osteoporosis incidences was continuously growing. He said that this was a global trend not only restricted to Asia.

According to IOF statistics, approximately 1.6 million hip fractures occur worldwide, each year, by 2050 this number could reach 6.3 million. In view of this situation, the IOF started a 3-year campaign in the hope to raise public awareness of osteoporosis and early prevention. The press conference to “Beauties and the Bones” was part of this campaign and the organisers hoped the appeals and the experiences of the seven beauty queens would help to make the public aware of the importance of a balanced diet and a sufficient intake of calcium and vitamin D on the one hand, and the necessity of regular exercise on the other.

Picture caption: Prof. Helmut Minne

Caption: Champion’s choice Active sport or loss of bone tissue? Out of the two, which one would you choose? The seven beauty queens have made their choice, have you?

Seven beauties for the protection of bones

One out of three women over fifty has brittle bones

(Picture: IOF Beauties and the Bones, “Move it or Lose it”).

1) I want to take the initiative and **educate women**

Justine Pasek, Miss Panama 2001, Miss Universe 2002.

Justine is an active member of various charity organisations fighting against AIDS, osteoporosis, malnutrition in children, etc. Upon learning about the osteoporosis situation in her home town 3 years ago, she was very happy to work together with the International Osteoporosis Foundation IOF to raise the public awareness of the disease. “As a daughter, sister, friend and mother-to-be, I want to educate women to pay attention to their body and health.”

2) Why is **being old so painful?**

Chalida Taochalee, Miss Thailand 1998

Ever since her 87-year-old grandmother fell and broke her arm, and was subsequently diagnosed with osteoporosis, now suffering great pain, Chalida asked herself: “Why is being old so painful?” Her grandmother’s situation made her understand the importance of strengthening one’s bones. “Most people reach their peak bone strength and density around the age of 20. Exercise can strengthen our bones and prevent osteoporosis at a later stage in life.”

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3) I pay particular attention to my **daughter's diet**

Manolya Onur, Miss Turkey 1976

Manolya admits: “When I was young, I was not aware of the importance of exercise and nutrition for my health.” But when her mother and aunt developed osteoporosis, she realised that a healthy lifestyle can prevent or at least delay our bones from becoming brittle. “I pay particular attention to my daughter’s diet, and encourage her to do sports, to build up strong and healthy bones.”

4) **We all have a responsibility** to look after our bones

Pilin Leon, Miss Venezuela, Miss World 1981

Pilin is no stranger to osteoporosis. A good friend of hers developed the disease at the age of 25, and often suffers from backache, made worse by the fact that she is also suffering from depression. Furthermore, her 95 year-old grandfather suffered a hip fracture as a result of osteoporosis and can now only walk with difficulty. With a friend and a family member both suffering from osteoporosis, Pilin says that this disease is even more common than breast cancer, and she thinks that everyone has a responsibility to look after their bones, and she chose dancing as a method to strengthen her bones.

5) True beauty means to **love your body**

Pavadee Wichienrat, Miss Thailand 1995, Mrs. World

“Girls lose weight in order to be super skinny, and in doing so they are gambling with their health.” Very slender Pavadee thinks that female beauty lies both on the outside as well as within the body. True beauty includes loving your body, accepting your own body and paying attention to its health and wellbeing.

6) If we do not exercise **and starve ourselves**, it is our bones that suffer

Ulla Weigerstorfer, Miss Austria, Miss World 1987

Prior to this conference, Ulla was not very aware of osteoporosis. “It was only at this conference that I learned about the fact that one in three women (over 50) will develop osteoporosis, and this really frightened me!”

Ulla was very happy to take part in this conference to learn about osteoporosis, and it changed her lifestyle. “Young people make light of the scares of diseases...actually, it is not at all difficult to invest in our bones. We must not starve ourselves in the name of losing weight, we must not sit in front of the TV all day, instead we can turn exercise into a hobby. Your body will pay you back in the future.”

7) **Active exercise** changes your life

Belinda Green, Miss Australia, Miss World 1972

“Life is so beautiful, it is not worth making mistakes.” In order for us to live a happy life, we need a healthy body. Belinda, who was beauty queen in the seventies, has always worked towards promoting a healthy lifestyle. It was almost a duty for her to take part in this conference, as her mother is also suffering from osteoporosis.

“My mum is a very vivid person who likes to travel and get around, but ever since she suffered her first bone fracture after a fall while travelling and was subsequently diagnosed with osteoporosis, she has been scared she might suffer another fall.”

Seeing her mother is suffering from osteoporosis, Belinda knows that she and her two daughters have a high risk of developing the disease. She says she is very happy that there is a way to prevent osteoporosis. “Foods rich in calcium and vitamin D and sport as regular part of your life can maintain the health of body and bones.” Belinda, who is over 50 years old, is

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diligent in exercising, and apart from going for walks every day, she does load sports and yoga twice a week to strengthen her bones and safeguard her bodily health. “Healthy bones are the foundation of a strong and healthy body.”

Centre text box:

Brittle bones: An invisible disease leading to bone fractures

Osteoporosis is a disease which causes a reduction in bone density and quality, makes the bones weak and often leads to bone fractures, especially fractures of the vertebrae, the wrists or the hip.

As the disease does not have any obvious symptoms, it is often referred to as an “invisible disease”, and patients are often only diagnosed with osteoporosis after suffering a bone fracture. Due to the loss of bone mass, the bones become very weak, and a sudden pressure, impact or fall can cause bone fractures or a collapse of the vertebrae. Patients with a collapse of the vertebrae will suffer serious backache, their body will shrink or deform, resulting in a hunchback or a serious distortion of posture.

Prevention Methods: In order to prevent brittle bones, you must lead a healthy lifestyle:

- A well-balanced diet, sufficient intake of calcium and vitamin D
- Regular load sport. Exercise beneficial for the bones includes: walking, skipping, aerobics, volleyball, jogging, etc.
- Avoid smoking and drinking large quantities of alcohol