



# Women Leaders' Roundtable

May 11, 2002  
Lisbon, Portugal

**IOF International Osteoporosis Foundation**

# 'THE PRICE WE PAY'

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# THE BURDEN OF BRITTLE BONES



Costing Osteoporosis in Australia

By: Access Economics

When: September 2001

Kindly supported by The Australian Dairy Corporation

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# Burden of Brittle Bones:

- First time Australian data has been compiled on economic & social impact of osteoporosis
- gives us startling but true picture

Compiled from

- a. Epidemiological research
- b. Australian Bureau of Statistics data
- c. Hospital & government data
- d. Australian and international research papers

# Burden of Brittle Bones in Australia

- 2001, 2 million Australians have osteoporosis
- Osteoporosis is an expensive disease
  - Direct costs total \$1.9 billion per annum in health costs (heaviest burden on hospitals / nursing homes)
- \$5.6 billion in indirect costs (\$2.8 billion usd)
  - Including lost earnings, carers, modifications

# Burden of Brittle Bones in Australia

Indirect costs represent –

- 1.2% of GDP in 2001
- Over \$1 billion in lost potential tax revenue
- Osteoporosis is more expensive than either diabetes or asthma (both National Health Priorities)

# Burden of Brittle Bones in Australia

- Osteoporosis costs Australians 25,000 years of healthy life in 2000-01 (DALYs = disability adjusted life years) with over half these due to premature death, disability and disease
- More years of healthy life are lost in Australia from osteoporosis than to Parkinson's Disease, HIV/Aids, rheumatoid arthritis & cervical cancer

# Burden of Brittle Bones



- Osteoporosis is more prevalent than high cholesterol, allergies or common cold  
(these stats comparable with USA & Europe)
- Musculoskeletal disorders (incl. OP) are the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of health system expenditure in Australia (just behind circulatory & digestive diseases)

# Burden of Brittle Bones in Australia

- In 2002 – someone is admitted to hospital with an osteoporotic fracture every 8.1 minutes
- Will rise to every 3.7 minutes by 2021 if nothing is done (ie: 1 in 3 hospital beds occupied by person with osteoporotic fracture)
- Numbers of fractures increasing at rate of 4% per annum
- 83% increase in hip fractures by 2011

# Burden of Brittle Bones in Australia

- Indirect costs conservatively estimated at \$5.57 billion in 2001 (incl; early retirement, carers costs, lost earnings, aids & devices)
- 25,796 DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life Years) lost due to O/P – this represents 1% of total burden of disease & injury in Australia
- In 1998, over 85,100 Australians classified as disabled due to osteoporosis

# Burden of Brittle Bones



- Low incomes – 80% of people with osteoporosis in 1999 National Health Survey (NHS) earned less than \$15,000 per annum (largely due to age factors)
- Rural – Urban Factors
  - osteoporosis over 50% more prevalent (relative to population) in urban areas than in rural (?)

# THE PROBLEM

- DXA only paid for under very narrow criteria, and mainly as a follow-up assessment after a fracture
- Majority of osteoporosis drugs only paid for after a fracture

# Diagnosis & Treatment Access Campaign

- November 2001, OA formed the - BMD/Industry/Key Bodies Round Table working with all parties and govt. to widen the criteria for Medicare rebates for BMD testing – submission presently before govt
- Co-incides with a lobbying campaign with industry groups to have subsidised drugs on the PBS for prevention as well as treatment of osteoporotic fractures
- Both initiatives have received a favourable response

# Final Note

- Recent Newspol Study in Australia
- Awareness of Osteoporosis as a disease, in women 30-55yrs was over 92% !
- However over half of these women think it is not a problem for them! – awareness not being translated into action
- The Osteoporosis Movement in Australia right now, is probably where Breast Cancer was about a decade ago