

IOF launches its first global TV advertising campaign, which powerfully demonstrates the need to prevent osteoporosis.

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www.osteofound.org



International Osteoporosis Foundation
Fighting osteoporosis and other skeletal diseases

Osteoporosis Action

EDITORIAL



Dear Readers

The osteoporosis movement gains speed. It has been given a boost by the launch of the first global advertising campaign for osteoporosis.

Now shown on CNN Europe and Eurosport, this powerful TV commercial will be translated into many languages and shown around the world. The goal: to increase public awareness of a disease that can kill if not diagnosed and treated in time.

Behind such a global campaign are the long-term efforts of a wide spectrum of people – the researchers, politicians, industry, healthcare experts, and, above all, the osteoporosis sufferers who have passionately channeled their time, energy and expertise to build an osteoporosis movement.

We should never forget that all progress depends on their willingness to continue this important work. They merit our gratitude.

Yours

Helmut Minne

The International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) is an independent non-profit umbrella organisation dedicated to the worldwide fight against osteoporosis. IOF's network includes 146 member societies in 76 locations.

IOF's Vision

- A world without osteoporotic fractures

IOF's Mission

- To increase the awareness and understanding of osteoporosis
- To support national osteoporosis societies in order to maximize their effectiveness
- To motivate people to take action to prevent, diagnose and treat osteoporosis

IOF's Goals

- Nurture and enlarge the IOF network of member societies worldwide
- Promote medical innovation and improved care
- Expand IOF partnerships with organizations working on similar or complementary issues and projects
- Lobby for policy change in all countries so that diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis becomes routine

First global osteoporosis awareness campaign launched

IOF has launched the first global TV campaign ever created to address the "silent epidemic" of osteoporosis. The TV ad shows three women calmly avoiding a dangerous steam train – a metaphor for taking action and avoiding the peril of osteoporosis. The 30 and 45 second spots were filmed on location near Bariloche, Argentina.

The campaign was launched on January 29, 2003 at the British Film Institute's IMAX cinema in London. The well known British actress Joanna Lumley donated her time to record the voice over for the new advertisement and urged women worldwide to gain control of their health by taking "the one-minute osteoporosis risk test, so we will all be aware of the risk factors and take action against osteoporosis."

"Osteoporosis fractures are increasing at a dramatic rate and the disease is still poorly recognized," noted Daniel Navid, IOF chief executive officer. "The TV spot will alert women worldwide that they can easily find out if they are at risk of osteoporosis by taking the IOF One Minute Risk Test on our website."

The film and the campaign's coordination and launch were realized through services donated by agencies within the Interpublic Group of Companies. Torre Lazur-McCann

Healthcare Worldwide, a member of the IOF's Committee of Corporate Advisors, provided coordination support and connected their affiliates with IOF member osteoporosis societies worldwide to initiate the campaign in local markets. They will continue to provide further coordination and support as the campaign rolls out. Campbell Mithun Advertising developed the creative concept and produced the television commercial. The launch event and media relations were undertaken by Weber Shandwick, the world's largest public relation agency.

"Many fractures could be avoided with earlier diagnosis and treatment ... this new global advertisement will help many more people realise just how serious this disease is."

David Reid, vice chairman of the Scientific Advisory Group of the (UK) National Osteoporosis Society which co-hosted the advertising launch

Joe Torre, chairman and chief executive officer of Torre Lazur-McCann Healthcare

The screenshot shows a promotional banner for the IOF TV ad. The banner features a video player with the text "Did you see the IOF TV ad?" and a close-up of a woman's face. Below the video player is a blue navigation bar with the following elements:

- "Want more info? Contact an osteoporosis society in your country:" followed by a "Select a country" dropdown menu.
- "Take the One-Minute Risk Test" with a right-pointing arrow icon.
- "See the TV spot" with a right-pointing arrow icon.



Well-known actresses Joanna Lumley (left) and Barbara Windsor lend their support to the TV ad campaign which encourages people to take the IOF One-minute Osteoporosis Risk Test.

Worldwide said: "This is an important public health initiative and we have a powerful television commercial that effectively demonstrates the need to prevent osteoporosis. We will encourage our local affiliates to work closely with IOF representative to produce local language adaptations and launch this campaign in their markets."

The film is available in English, and soon in Spanish, Arabic and French, with numerous national languages expected. CNN Europe and Eurosport have donated air time during prime viewing hours, and other regional networks are expected to donate air time soon. For further information visit the IOF website or contact IOF at info@osteofound.org

Challenges of managing osteoporosis in South Africa

The National Osteoporosis Foundation of South Africa (NOF) was established in 1993 with the main aims of (i) propagating public awareness and heightening knowledge of osteoporosis (ii) providing a patient care service (iii) educating doctors and allied health professionals about the prevention and management of the disease, and (iv) promoting and supporting research in the field.

NOF is composed of a Committee of Post-graduate Training and Research, a Committee of Patient Education and Services, a Densitometry Committee and a Committee of Finance and Fundraising. The organisation is managed by a Council of fourteen. NOF has been a member of the IOF family since 1998.

"Access to diagnosis and treatment is not available to a large section of the population."

Patient Care

Out of a population of 43 million people, 10 million South Africans are of Asian, White and Coloured (mixed-race) descent, and potentially at high risk of developing osteoporosis. Osteoporotic fractures are less common in our Black populations, but unlike the situation in Europe and America, the lumbar bone mass of Black and White South Africans is nearly identical! The paucity of accurate local statistics on the incidence of osteoporosis and related fractures is a major stumbling block in the drive to prevent and manage this disease optimally. The transition of especially African subjects from rural areas to the cities in search of work and an improved life will have further implications on their bone health – the nature of which is uncertain and constitutes an important research topic.

In South Africa, where malnutrition and infections (including the HIV/AIDS pandemic and tuberculosis) are rife, osteoporosis is not regarded as a health priority. Access to diagnosis and treatment is not available to a large section of the population. In state hospitals, the availability of modern drugs to manage osteoporosis is limited because of high costs.

Yet, only ten years ago, not a single DEXA apparatus (to measure bone mass) existed. Today, more than a hundred such machines, and many more ultrasound and other devices to measure peripheral BMD, are scattered all over the country. Most of the modern drugs to manage osteoporosis are available in the private sector. Moreover, as highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART) becomes available to treat those suffering from AIDS,

the metabolic side-effects of this therapy, including its effects on bone, are becoming clinically relevant.

Despite these constraints, NOF has continued to provide, at minimal cost, osteoporosis sufferers with information brochures, Z-folds, a quarterly newsletter ("Osteonews"), a telephone helpline and support in many other ways.

Education

The education of patients, doctors and allied health professionals including medical aid funders has comprised an important objective of the Foundation since its inception. No less than 10 National Bone & Mineral Congresses (always sporting a number of international guest speakers) and numerous CME symposia / workshops have attempted to keep our health professionals abreast of new developments in the field. In 2000, a Densitometry Course for physicians was held under the auspices of the International Society for Clinical Densitometry. This was followed up by a national DEXA Course for technicians in April 2002. National Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Osteoporosis was compiled by NOF and published in Sept. 2000.

We are, however, quite isolated here on the southern tip of Africa. In this regard, the IOF has played a fundamental role in helping NOF to perform its educational function – something for which we are immensely grateful.

Research

The heterogeneity of the South African populations, the transition from rural to urban lifestyles, the existence of areas of endemic fluorosis and extreme calcium deficiency, provide many exciting challenges to a growing number of clinical researchers in the field. Over the years, South African physicians have also distinguished themselves as superb clinical drug trialists – often this activity provides the only way in which some of their indigent patients can gain access to new drugs available to manage osteoporosis. Furthermore, a limited number of basic research laboratories have been at the cutting-edge of more fundamental research in osteology – unravelling the cellular and molecular mechanisms of disease.

Much more, however, needs to be done! Simple, yet fundamental research – often epidemiologic in nature and not that readily fundable by official agencies like the universities – is required. A typical case in point in



Walk and Run Race held in Cape Town in conjunction with World Osteoporosis Day in October 2002

volves studies on the prevalence of different fractures in different ethnic groups. Or, an assessment of the "aftercare" ("prevent the next fracture") of patients presenting with a hip fracture.

Challenges and opportunities

Managing osteoporosis in South Africa faces numerous challenges in many areas ranging from increasing awareness and education of both patients and healthcare professionals including funders and the Government, to improving access to diagnosis and therapy, including appropriate reimbursement of said management.

We are, however, blessed with a number of opportunities – not least of all, an established Foundation and committed members, dedicated to improve the lot of those who suffer from this disease. In partnering other organisations both within (e.g. Bone & Joint Decade Action Committee; The Sports Science Institute) and outside our borders (IOF), education, research and above all patient care in osteology will undoubtedly go from strength to strength.

*Contributed by Michele Wolman & Professor Stephen Hough
National Osteoporosis Society, South Africa*



World Congress on
Osteoporosis

2004

May 14-18, 2004

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

www.osteofound.org

Linda Edwards remembered in new award

IOF is honoring Linda Edwards, who died at the age of 54 in December 2002, by initiating the "IOF Linda Edwards Memorial Award". Linda, who was 54 and had been the director of the UK National Osteoporosis Society (NOS) since its creation in 1986, will be remembered as a pioneer of osteoporosis advocacy both in the UK and internationally. Osteoporosis societies which are members of IOF will be eligible to apply for the bi-annual award valued at 20,000 SFr.

Over the past 16 years Linda established the NOS as one of the most rapidly growing health charities in Britain. The NOS now has a growing membership of 27,000 and 130 nationwide groups. Much of this growth in the charity's work and awareness of the disease across the UK is largely due to the pioneering work by Linda.

Linda was also the first non-doctor and woman elected to IOF's board in 1996. The

same year, Linda launched the first World Osteoporosis Day, now established globally in perpetuity on 20 October each year. Linda established the IOF Education Grants programme and hosted the first meeting of the World Congress of Patient Societies at Bath in 1988, establishing a strong annual forum for the exchange of ideas and support for new and existing national societies. Under the auspices of the NOS Linda established an open door policy in the UK to encourage other patient societies to visit, learn and exchange ideas.

Those who met Linda were struck by her compassion and never-ending

determination to vastly reduce the numbers of cases of the disease and increase awareness. Her achievements in the UK and internationally will not be forgotten.



Other memorials to Linda

This year's Kohn Award for outstanding achievement in the field of osteoporosis, which is awarded by an independent panel on behalf of the NOS, is being given posthumously to Linda. The NOS has also designated funds to create two studentships in memory of Linda Edwards. These will run over the next three years. Details of the studentships are available on the NOS website www.nos.org.uk

Women leaders focus on osteoporosis

Around the world, osteoporosis is a serious, widespread and costly disease that is generally under-diagnosed and under-treated. Although it is estimated that one in three women and one in eight men over the age of fifty are affected, osteoporosis is still poorly serviced by government and private health care systems. It is not uncommon for patients to be told that diagnosis and treatment can only be reimbursed after they have broken a bone.

The IOF Roundtable of Women Leaders held in May 2002 was the first occasion on which leading women joined forces to highlight the need for broader access to diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis. This event has been the inspiration for other "Women's Roundtables" in Chile, Israel, Lithuania and

Portugal, with several other national roundtables possibly expected to take place in the future in Australia, Germany, Italy and regional roundtables in Asia and the Mediterranean.

In Lithuania ... a Roundtable discussion featuring leading women from the region was held on October 24, 2002 to coincide with World Osteoporosis Day. As well as invited officials and speakers, the event featured the participation of the Foundation's patron, Lithuanian First Lady Mrs. Alma Adamkiene. A "Call to Action" document was signed which calls on the legislative and executive authorities in Lithuania to draw attention to the problem of osteoporosis.

The document calls for:

- Recognition of osteoporosis as a public health priority
- Access to bone mineral density scans be facilitated for people with osteoporosis risk factors.
- Access to treatment before the first fracture be facilitated for people with osteoporosis and expand possibilities for treating osteoporosis with fracture.
- Improving the financial possibilities of the largest social osteoporosis risk group – elderly people – for diagnosis and treatment.

In Chile ... the Chilean Foundation of Osteoporosis and the Chilean Society of Osteology and Mineral Metabolism marked World Osteoporosis Day by holding a special event for women journalists. A "Roundtable" of society officials from the two societies presented information about osteoporosis and answered questions from the women journalists. Prominent attendees of the WOD event included Martha Pelaez, head of the Ageing and Health Program of the Pan American Health Organization in Washington as well as Maria Antonietta Saa, Deputy of the Chilean Parliament.

In Israel ... the First Women Leaders' Panel was held on October 23, 2002. The event's patron was the wife of the former president of Israel, Mrs. Reuma Weitzman and the seven women panelists included parliamentarians and prominent women's advocates. The panel signed a petition presented to the government leaders and policymakers to make the diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis a priority on the public agenda and to increase reimbursement for diagnosis and treatment for those under the age of 65.

In Portugal ... a National Roundtable took place in Portugal on October 19, 2002. Famous Portuguese women, including Maria de Jesus Barroso, wife of the prime minister, the Duchesse of Bragança, Leonor Beleza, a member of parliament and former health minister, and other women from various fields – economists, regional government, businesswomen, and actresses signed a pledge called "together for prevention".



Lithuanian First Lady, Alma Adamkiene signs the "Call to Action" as invited speaker Mel Read, MEP, UK looks on.

OSC launches the first evidence-based clinical practice guidelines

The Osteoporosis Society of Canada (OSC) announced the publication of the first evidence-based clinical practice guidelines for the diagnosis and management of osteoporosis. The guidelines, published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ), provide Canadian physicians with accurate information on how to identify and assess who is at a high risk of developing osteoporosis, how to appropriately counsel their patients, and how to treat them with proven therapies.

"For the society, the development of the guidelines were a monumental and essential project," says President and CEO Joyce Gordon, "consuming many Society resources, both in terms of funding and human resources. Our job is now to share the report and its recommendations to improve osteoporosis care in this country".

The OSC is using all the resources at its disposal to ensure that the guidelines have a real impact. In addition to spreading the in-

formation among Canada's health care professionals through a wide number of channels (for example, 66,000 copies were distributed to physicians across the country as a supplement to the CMAJ), the OSC is drafting a policy document which interprets the guidelines for government policy-makers.

The policy document and guidelines will be submitted to government representatives across the country. A link to the online document is available on the OSC website: www.osteoporosis.ca and printed copies are also available from the Society.

Summarized from OSC newsletter "Osteoblast", Volume 9/1/2003

At the forefront of osteoporosis research and treatment in Iran

Endocrinology & Metabolism Research Centre, Tehran University of Medical Sciences

Osteoporosis is a major health issue and significant socio-economic burden in Iran. Initial studies have shown that more than half the population of Tehran between the ages of 20 and 69 years suffers from vitamin D deficiency, one of the prime risk factors for osteoporosis and consequent fractures. It stands to reason therefore that one of the main targets of national healthcare programming should be osteoporosis.

The Endocrinology and Metabolism Research Centre (EMRC), in conjunction with the Ministry of Health's Secretariat for Health (MOH-SH), has been carrying out a significant amount of research in the field of osteoporosis, disorders of vitamin D metabolism, and dietary fortification/enrichment:

The Iranian National Osteoporosis Prevention Plan (INOP-1)

This project was initiated two years ago with the help of the MOH-SH General Office of Endocrinology and Metabolism (GOEM) and academic input from the universities of Tehran, Shiraz, Mashad, Bushehr and Tabriz. The objectives of this study were to determine the status quo; to obtain a normal range for bone density in the Iranian population; to measure the risk of, and precipitating factors for, osteoporosis, especially vitamin D; as well as the relationship between bone density and important lifestyle indicators such as physical activity. In parallel, the project aimed to raise public awareness of the disorder itself, the risk factors associated with it and methods of prevention, and to improve the level of knowledge of healthcare professionals on osteoporosis and its risk factors, the principles of prevention, screening, diagnosis and management of patients.

Design of a vitamin D fortification programme

Initial results from the above study in the three cities of Tehran, Shiraz and Mashad show that more than 80% of the population

in these areas suffers to some degree from vitamin D deficiency. Given the central role played by vitamin D in the pathogenesis of osteomalacia, osteoporosis and immunodeficiency, and recent evidence confirming its role in the pathogenesis of other diseases, the EMRC and the Department of Nutrition at MOH-SH have carried out an extensive study of the fortification of foodstuff, including milk and yoghurt, with vitamin D. The preliminaries are also in place for the trial fortification of milk with vitamin D, and are being vigorously followed up by the MOH-SH nutrition unit.

Establishment of the University of Tehran's Bone Densitometry Centre

From the earliest stages of INOP-1, and with a considerable amount of follow-up, the EMRC has acquired a bone densitometer, which not only serves a research purpose at the Centre but also delivers diagnostic services to other departments within the hospital.

Purchase of new densitometry equipment, and research and comparative studies

Currently, instruments using ultrasound to measure bone density for diagnostic and, in particular, screening purposes are becoming increasingly prominent. In view of the importance of research in this domain, therefore, EMRC has been in contact with scientific and industrial bodies and been able as a result to acquire two ultrasonic bone densitometers, one for the ankle region and the other for fingers. This technique is currently undergoing appraisal with the help of volunteers from the INOP study population.

International contacts

There is now a greater focus on contact with experts in the field of osteoporosis, at home and abroad, in order to exchange and benefit from their views and experiences, and to present the results of our activities in Iran.

Contacts with the International Osteoporosis Foundation's representative for the Middle-East region, participation in the International Densitometry Workshop in Lebanon, and presentation of our research output at domestic and international gatherings have all gone to further this goal.

A Strategic Plan for Osteoporosis

Given the importance of osteoporosis and the significant economic burden it imposes on the public, EMRC has taken steps to compile a Strategic Plan for Osteoporosis (SPO). At present, preliminary studies in the field have been completed, and priorities for the different sectors involved (education, research, prevention, treatment...) have been identified. The strategic plan is to be pursued with the help of GOEM at the MOH-SH.

The EMRC has been mandated by the Iranian Ministry of Health to pursue all matters pertaining to osteoporosis in Iran, including the diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis within the framework of managed care, expenditure related to this disorder, assessment of vitamin D status in the community and vitamin D fortification.

Contributed by Professor Bagher Larijani, Director of the Endocrinology and Metabolism Research Center



Professor Bagher Larijani, director and chief scientific officer of EMRC, receives the award "Research Center of the Year 2002" at the 8th Razi Scientific Festival in January 2002 from President Mohammad Khatami. From left: Professor Malekafzali, undersecretary for research and technology; Dr. Pezeshkian, minister of health and medical education; President Mohammad Khatami; Professor Bagher Larijani

Patient advocacy in Poland

Healthy Bone Enthusiast Society (STENKO)

With its total population of 38.5 million and a growing life expectancy, osteoporosis is expected to be a significant health problem in Poland. It is estimated that approximately 8 million people may be affected (5 million women and 3 million men). **Data indicates that 100,000 patients are receiving some form of treatment, but 300,000 patients who are already diagnosed with osteoporosis are not taking any therapeutic measures.**

Whether a patient receives treatment is influenced significantly by their ability to pay for medication.

Those figures show that much more should be done to increase public awareness and people's motivation to look after their bone health. There is also a need to improve osteoporosis awareness among health professionals and in the Ministry of Health.

That was the idea behind the launch of the Healthy Bone Enthusiast Society (STENKO)-Patient's Society. The society's primary goals



Approximately 500 people attend the quarterly public meetings which are held in Warsaw.

are to: improve awareness, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis; increase access to densitometry machines for high-risk groups; increase the number of osteoporosis patients receiving therapy; get osteoporosis medication and tests reimbursed.

Every year, quarterly public meetings are organised in Warsaw. Polish experts in osteoporosis are invited to speak at the meetings which are open to all who are interested in osteoporosis. Lectures are given on all aspects of prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis, including diet and exercise. Before and after the lectures, free screening tests are offered to all interested older people who are present at the meetings. The participants, approximately 500 people, are also given the opportunity to consult with the doctors and osteoporosis specialists about any specific problems they may have.

Our immediate objectives are to support fitness programmes for post-menopausal and elderly women (to begin April 2003) and to create the new Centre of Osteoporosis Education (CEDOS) for patients and general practitioners.

Given that Poland is due to join the European Union next year, we can expect changes in the health care system in the near future. Together with the Multidisciplinary Osteoporosis Forum and the Polish Foundation of Osteoporosis we will work to strengthen our efforts to establish osteoporosis as one of the national health priorities.

Contributed by Iwona Drozdowska-Rusinowicz, President, Healthy Bone Enthusiasts Society (STENKO)

What is the BBCC?

"A busy and fruitful experience."

M. Kruk, Polish delegate

The original idea for the Baltic Bone and Cartilage Conference (BBCC) emerged in the early 1990s, amongst a group of Polish and Finnish scientists. Their aim was to provide a forum for young scientists to discuss developments and issues in the field of bone and cartilage metabolism and disease. Creating an informal, friendly atmosphere, which would encourage the free exchange of information, and keeping costs low were important objectives. In due course, other Baltic region countries joined and, following conferences in Poland, Denmark and Sweden, Binz, on the island of Rügen in Germany, was cho-

sen as the venue for the latest BBCC, which took place in September 2001.

The majority of the 168 participants at Binz were from countries around the Baltic but as the success of the conference has spread delegates from a wider geographical region have been attracted. "Ambassadors" from beyond the Baltic are making a welcome contribution to the conference program.

The focus is still very much on young scientists, and the conference remains small; with the program planned to allow free discussion and exchange of ideas and experience among the participants. We look forward to the next BBCC which will be held in Finland in 2003.

Contributed by Professor Roman Lorenc, Poland

PATIENT STORY



Sara Padilla,
Costa Rica

Sara Padilla had always been a healthy woman. She had never visited a medical clinic or been in hospital – even

giving birth to her five sons at home.

In 1979, when she was 52 years old, Sara fractured her hip. One of her sons was changing a light bulb when he fell from the ladder and crashed into Sara. Sara was knocked down so badly that very complex surgery was required to repair her broken hip. The recovery process was long and difficult.

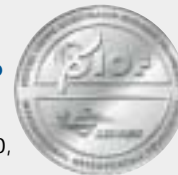
One year later Sara fell while walking in her home, and fractured the other hip. She underwent surgery for a second time. The doctors sent her home with some painkillers and rehabilitation instructions.

After the hip fractures, Sara's life changed dramatically. She has had to be cautious in her movements and has in fact never regained her full independence. Today, Sara can't even take a regular bus, because the steps are too high for her.

It wasn't until a few years ago (about 17 years after her first fracture!) that Sara learned she was suffering from osteoporosis, and that the two fractures were not just a result of her being "careless". She now takes her medication, has received education about osteoporosis, and better understands what happened and how she can cooperate with her medical team. Sara is optimistic, especially after seeing the improved results of her bone densitometry and laboratory tests.

In Costa Rica, the Fundacion Costarricense de Osteoporosis is actively working to increase knowledge of osteoporosis among the public and health professionals. The Foundation's work will ensure that in the future no one will have to go without proper diagnosis and treatment as Sara did.

IOF-Servier Young Investigator Research Fellowship



This bi-annual fellowship of € 40,000, generously sponsored by Servier, is available to researchers under the age of 40 for outstanding original work of international relevance. It will be awarded at the IOF World Congress on Osteoporosis in Rio de Janeiro, May 14-18, 2004.

Application forms are available on the IOF website www.osteofound.org
Deadline: December 1, 2003.

ECCEO – more than science

Report on the 3rd European Congress on Clinical and Economic Aspects of Osteoporosis and Osteoarthritis

The Third European Congress on Clinical and Economic Aspects of Osteoporosis and Osteoarthritis, (ECCEO 3) which took place in Barcelona in November 2002, was a great success in more than one respect. With more than 2200 delegates, the meeting has now become the major European event in the field of osteoporosis, both in terms of the attendance and the number of clinical results shown for the first time. Organised by the World Health Collaborating Center on Public Health Aspects of Rheumatic Diseases under the auspices of the International Osteoporosis Foundation, ECCEO also maintains a strong focus on the social and economic aspects of rheumatic diseases. This makes it an attractive forum not just for researchers and clinicians, but also for health policy makers and regulatory authorities.

"This insidious disease robs women and men of their quality of life, mobility and independence."

Mel Read, MEP, UK and chair of the European Parliament Osteoporosis Interest Group speaking at the opening of the ECCEO

At the congress, a task force which includes representatives of the IOF and members of the Regional Office of the World Health Organisation in Copenhagen, decided to investigate the best ways to implement guidelines for the diagnosis and management of osteoporosis at the national level. This task force will complement and geographically broaden work conducted by the European Parliament Osteoporosis Interest Group and the EU Osteoporosis Consultation Panel to move towards making osteoporosis a priority by governments.

The ECCEO is considered the reference European Congress for those scientists who want an overall perception of the latest scientific results in the field of osteoporosis and osteoarthritis, in a cost-conscious and social perspective.

4th European Symposium on Clinical and Economic Aspects of Osteoporosis and Osteoarthritis, Nice, France, Nov. 14-17, 2003. Visit: nice.piettcommunication.com



The congress was chaired by Professor Jean-Yves Reginster and IOF President Professor Pierre D. Delmas. In photo Professor Reginster welcomes participants to the congress.

AROUND THE WORLD

German initiative against osteoporosis

"Osteoporosis is one of the worst chronic diseases in Europe but scarcely any woman in Germany knows her individual osteoporosis risk" stated Rita Süßmuth MP, former President of the Bundestag at the launch of the German National Initiative Against Osteoporosis.

A new survey (www.gm.wiso.uni-erlangen.de) confirms that in Germany less than half of all osteoporosis cases are diagnosed and only half of these are treated. At least 3 million women with osteoporosis in Germany are not diagnosed or treated. Yet osteoporosis is not a priority in German health policy. The National Initiative Against Osteoporosis aims to change this.

The launch press conference took place on December 10, 2002 at the Virchow house in Berlin with more than 50 journalists in attendance. Well known television presenter Dr Franziska Rubin moderated the conference which was organised by the German Green Cross and supported by the Bone & Joint Decade German network and the Bundeselbsthilfeverband für Osteoporose. Angelika Niebler MEP, member of the European Parliament Osteoporosis Interest Group is actively supporting this initiative.



TV presenter Dr. Franziska Rubin interviews Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth MP, former President of the Bundestag, at the launch of the National Osteoporosis Initiative

Osteoporosis survey conducted on behalf of the Italian Senate

The Health Commission of the Italian Senate is running a national survey to collect basic information on osteoporosis in Italy. This survey will drive future political actions to fight osteoporosis.

Finns add vitamin D to milk.

Numerous studies have shown that the intake of vitamin D (vital for healthy bones) in

Finland is lower than recommended. This is coupled with a low human synthesis of vitamin D in Finland because of limited sunlight. In a positive development, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health amended its policy in December 2002 to allow the addition of vitamin D to milk and other liquid milk products.

Portuguese Health Authority develops a national plan for osteoporosis

A national plan against rheumatic diseases is now being developed by the General Directorate of Health, in cooperation with health-care professionals, with leadership from the High Commissioner of Health. The final document for ministerial approval is expected by the end of March, 2003. The plan will be implemented over a 5-year period after approval. Osteoporosis is included as a specific disease priority and is expected to focus on correct knowledge of the incidence of osteoporosis-related fractures; assessment of risk factors for osteoporosis, fractures and falls (general practitioners); implementation of diagnostic guidelines; implementation of treatment guidelines; correct allocation of resources; research funding and development of prevention campaigns.

Congo Society of Osteoporosis launches awareness campaign

The newly founded 'Société Congolaise de l'Ostéoporose' (SCO) is the first IOF member society from central Africa. The society has recently launched an awareness campaign on osteoporosis, at St Joseph, in the district (commune) of Kalamu. The event, which brought together educators, scientists, medical experts and students, aimed to increase awareness of osteoporosis, which remains a poorly known disease in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A breakthrough for male osteoporosis patients in Hungary

Hungary's Department of Social Security has accepted proposals by the country's patient osteoporosis society, HOPA, to reimburse 90% of treatment costs (alendronate) for male osteoporosis patients. This is an important breakthrough for male patients who will now be able to afford therapy.

**IOF Patron**

Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan

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Note: Although most member societies are from nations, the IOF membership also includes independent territories, commonwealths, protectorates and geographical areas.

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Distributed by:

Acknowledgements

IOF thanks Servier for the generous and unrestricted grant which has made the publication of Osteoporosis Action possible.

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