Azerbaijan

Overview
In Azerbaijan many people are potentially at high risk of osteoporotic fractures. Osteoporosis is not recognized as a major health problem in Azerbaijan. However, everyday medical practice indicates that this disease is of great medical and social importance. A major problem arises with diagnostic tools: densitometry is not reimbursed and it is very expensive (100-120 USD) for the majority of the population. To date vitamin D and calcium deficiency has not been found to be a major problem. Health care workers are interested in the problem of osteoporosis and there is a particular interest among the Azerbaijan Rheumatology Association. Nevertheless, there is no public organization in the country with a specific sphere of interest in the field of osteoporosis. Our actions will be directed first of all to the creation of the Azerbaijan Osteoporosis Association, under the IOF umbrella. Then we will be able to raise awareness of osteoporosis and reveal problems and issues in the general media.

Key findings
Azerbaijan is a rapidly developing country with a population of 9 million people. Currently it is estimated that 18% of the population is aged 50 and over while only 5% are 70 and over. By 2050, projections show that 39% of the population will be 50 and over and 13% will be 70 and over (fig. 1).

The main problem is the lack of accurate epidemiological data to estimate the medical and social significance of osteoporosis for the Azerbaijan population.

Hip fractures
It is estimated that only 20% of patients receive surgical treatment after a hip fracture. The average cost of conservative treatment is 1,000 USD, while the average cost of an osteosynthesis is 1,000 USD and a hip replacement costs 4,000 USD. The average cost of rehabilitation after hip fracture is 4,000 USD.

Figure 1 Population projection for Azerbaijan until 2050

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base

Diagnosis
In Azerbaijan there are 7 DXA scanners (0.9 per million population); all of them are located in the main city of Baku. There are also 3 quantitative ultrasound instruments (QUS). Densitometry is paid by the patient themselves and the cost of one examination varies from 50 to 100 USD.

In the country almost all modern methods of osteoporosis treatment are available. Nevertheless, the patient pays for the treatment from their own resources.

Prevention, education, government policy
Osteoporosis is not recognized as one of the most significant social and medical problems in Azerbaijan. Health care workers take interest in the problem of osteoporosis and particularly great interest is displayed by the Azerbaijan Rheumatology Association. Nevertheless, there is no public organization in the country with a specific sphere of interest in the field of osteoporosis. It is expected that this situation will be rectified in the near future with the creation of the Azerbaijan Osteoporosis Association and its membership in the IOF.