Estonia

Overview
The Estonian Osteoporosis Society is a nonprofit organization, in which medical doctors from various disciplines participate. The medical disciplines represented are rheumatologists, orthopaedic surgeons, general practitioners, endocrinologists, gynaecologists, gastroenterologists and physiotherapists. The Estonian Osteoporosis Society was founded in 1999 and since that time has been a member of the IOF.

The Society’s goal is to identify the problems associated with osteoporosis and share information about prevention, diagnosis and treatment options particularly with medical doctors. The Society organizes lectures and conferences, and osteoporosis diagnosis and treatment guidelines have been prepared in collaboration with IOF. The IOF Osteoporosis Diagnosis Course with Densitometry Certification has also been organized.

Different campaigns have been carried out for the general population. These primarily prevention-oriented activities take place mainly in October.

Key findings
The present population in Estonia is estimated to be 1.3 million; of this 37% (480,000) is aged 50 and over and 13% (166,000) is 70 and over. By 2050, it is estimated that 52% (444,000) of the population will be 50 and over and 24% (209,000) will be 70 and over, while the total population will decrease to 862,0001 (fig. 1).

Hip fractures
The number of hip fractures in Estonia is estimated to be 1,000 cases per year.

Diagnosis
In Estonia, there are 10 DXA scanners for a total population of 1.34 million inhabitants. The waiting time for a DXA scan in the public health system is 2 to 4 weeks. The cost of a DXA scan is 259 EEK (€17). The exam is fully reimbursed when the patient is directed to DXA by a GP or other doctors. Patients can self refer for DXA measurements, but need to cover the costs themselves.

Reimbursement
In general, bisphosphonate treatments are reimbursed up to 50% for osteopenic patients and in the case of osteoporosis without fracture, and up to 90% in patient with osteoporosis with fracture. All other treatments to all patients are reimbursed to 200 EEK (€13) per prescription. Calcium and vitamin D are not reimbursed.

Vertebral fractures
The prevalence rate of vertebral fracture for men and women over 50 years is estimated to be 200 cases per 10,000 population.

Calcium and vitamin D
National guidelines have been published regarding optimum daily intake of calcium and vitamin D but there is no national public health programme.
Prevention, education, government policy

Osteoporosis is not considered a national health priority in Estonia but the Estonian government has supported some campaigns for osteoporosis, especially for patients with rheumatic disorders and glucocorticoid users. Data regarding fractures are based on hospital invoices as there is no national fragility fracture registry.

References

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

In order to reduce the extremely high rates of death and disability following hip fracture, it is critical that patients receive modern standards of care and post-fracture surgical treatment.