The Republic of Moldova

Overview

The Association Against Osteoporosis of the Republic of Moldova was founded in 2005 during the conference conducted together with the Osteoporosis Association of the Republic of Ukraine. It consists of 29 doctors and 6 patients. The major tasks of the Association are to direct the attention of medical specialists and patients to the problem of osteoporosis; study the evolution and specificities of osteoporosis in the population; assess risk factor prevalence in Moldova and seek methods to effectively correct these risk factors; provide information about osteoporosis for patients and medical personnel at all stages of medical care; and to provide consultations and advice on an out-patient basis and on-line. The Association’s website www.osteoporosis-md.com provides information for doctors and patients. The members of the Association Against Osteoporosis carry out educational programmes for patients and doctors and free consultations in different cities of Moldova.

Key findings

Moldova is a South-Eastern European country with a small but multinational population. In 2010 the population of Moldova is 3.6 million people: 1.8 million men and 1.9 million women. Projections indicate that by 2030 the population will decrease to 3.1 million people; this is mainly associated with a high migration of the population and a low birth rate. The negative tendency will continue and by 2050 it is estimated that the population will be 2.6 million people while the proportion of ageing population will grow; more than 35% of the population will be older than 50. Thus, this population decline combined with an increase of the total elderly and middle-aged population will consequently lead to an increase in the number of patients with osteoporosis.

Figure 1 Population projection for Moldova until 2050

According to official statistics it is almost impossible to judge the incidence of osteoporosis and associated fractures in the Republic of Moldova. Population studies on the prevalence and morbidity of osteoporosis and osteopenia have never been conducted.

Hip fractures

The State Department of Medical Statistics has no data on the number of hip fractures per year. Medical care of patients with hip fracture is not a subject of national protocol and is not standardized at a state level. General information about hospitalization of patients with hip fracture is absent. However it is clear that the number of patients having had surgical treatment is too low. A large proportion of patients are not hospitalized, especially those over 75 years old. The most common reasons for surgical refusal are concurrent diseases and the patient’s inability to pay for the operation. Currently there are only four clinics
in the country with specialists (orthopedists-traumatologists) qualified to perform such operations. Dero-
tational boot and skeletal traction are widespread conservative methods of hip fracture treatment even
at hospital. Many patients with hip fracture, espe-
cially elderly patients, do not appear in the statistics
at all, as they seek medical attention from their family
doctor only and are not hospitalized.

In Moldova there is a system of compulsory state
health insurance that provides the minimum of
medical care guaranteed by the state. According to the
national company of medical insurance the average
cost of a hip fracture case as per contracts with spe-
cialized medical institutions is: osteosynthesis 574
USD; hip replacement 2,305 USD; and rehabilitation
after hip fracture 225 USD.

The official funds dedicated to covering the cost of
surgical treatment of fractures and rehabilitation is
not enough and patients are forced to pay for the
prosthesis, some medications and rehabilitation them-
selves. This significantly limits accessibility to quali-
fied surgical treatment.

### Vertebral fractures

No available information

### Diagnosis

In Moldova there are 2 DXA scanners. Both of them
are in the capital city Kishinev and belong to private
clinics. Densitometry costs approximately 23 USD
and patients must pay themselves. The country has 3
QUS instruments.

### Reimbursement

In Moldova there is no reimbursement for osteopo-
rosis treatment by the state so people must pay for phar-
maceutical preparations and calcium and vitamin D
supplements. However, that is quite often financially
impossible. In 2009 the average monthly income per
person was approximately 100 USD: 125 USD for the
urban population and approximately 85 USD for the
rural population.

### Calcium and vitamin D

There are no data on vitamin D levels among adults.
As for vitamin D deficiency in children under 2 years
old, the incidence of diagnosed rickets makes up
around 10% depending on the district of the country.
Research conducted by the Association Against Os-
teoporosis of the Republic of Moldova calculated
the quantity of calcium in the average diet (until
now 1,025 people were examined) revealing that the
average daily calcium intake was 383.5±22.4 mg.

Currently vitamin D and calcium supplements are rec-
ommended according to several documents approved by the Ministry of Public Health. Vitamin D intake
by young children is regulated by the Programme of
Integrated Management of Children’s Diseases up
to 5 years. The Ministry of Public Health and the
National Protocol for Osteoporosis in Adults recom-
dended prophylactic doses of calcium and vitamin D
for adults of different age groups. The recommended
dosage of calcium is 1,300 mg per day for adoles-
cents, 1,000 mg per day for adults and 1,200 mg per
day after 50 years. The recommended dose of vitamin
D3 varies from 400 to 800 IU (International Unit).

### Prevention, education, government policy

At the moment osteoporosis is not recognized in the
country as a socially important problem. Doctors’
awareness of osteoporosis is low. To address this
problem, the State Medical and Pharmaceutical
University ‘Nicolae Testemitanu’ of the Republic of
Moldova organizes a two-week educational course
‘Problems of diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis’
in collaboration with the Association Against Oste-
oporosis of the Republic of Moldova.

There has been increased awareness of the problem
of osteoporosis in the general population due to the
activity of the Association Against Osteoporosis of
the Republic of Moldova, the activity of companies
among doctors and patients, and international funds
supporting the development and validation of norma-
tive documents on this issue.

### References

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