Aim and Objectives

- To investigate gaps that may exist between physician and patient understanding of the emotional and physical impact of osteoporosis
- To identify barriers to patient adherence to medication
- To understand the ways in which osteoporosis patients can better share and receive information about the management and treatment of osteoporosis

Methods

- 844 patients and 837 physicians (GPs and specialists) took part in structured telephone interviews in June and July 2009, each lasting an average of 15-20 minutes each
- Patients were women with post-menopausal osteoporosis taking prescribed medication or in the past 2 years. Physicians had 3-35 years experience in treating osteoporosis patients, and included general practitioners (GPs) who saw ≥10 (exception: in Hungary ≥5) and specialists ≥20 osteoporosis patients per month
- Interviews were carried out in Australia, Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and UK

Results

1. Patient knowledge

- 69% of patients feel well informed about their osteoporosis
- 93% of patients correctly describe osteoporosis as a condition that “causes bones to be brittle and fracture/break easily”
- However 57% of patients still incorrectly describe osteoporosis as just a “part of getting old”
- 1 in 3 patients cannot identify any of the risk factors for osteoporosis

2. Treatment adherence

- 82% of patients confirm that they are informed by their physicians about the importance of treatment adherence. But 29% do not see a problem in missing a dose once in a while
- 32% of patients discontinue treatment for an average of 5.5 months

3. Quality of life

- Patients worried about many aspects of their quality of life after diagnosis
- Physicians estimated these fears to be less prevalent than they were (p<0.05 in all cases)

4. Patient support tools

- Patients were asked what they would want from a support tool
- Many wanted access to clear information and support from their peers
- 94% of patients indicated that their specialist were credible sources of information for osteoporosis and 88% indicated their GP

5. Physician support

- Physicians were asked if they would support patient programmes and what they consider credible sources of information to be

Conclusions

- Initiating a community-wide programme may enable patients to manage their concerns and address unmet needs in osteoporosis management. Any programme that is developed must consider the needs of the patient and should be easy to understand, improve patient-physician dialogue, allow patient-patient contact, encourage treatment adherence and help patients to maintain or improve their quality of life.

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