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NAMS Releases New Position Statement on Management of Osteoporosis in Postmenopausal Women

Updates reflect major advances in the assessment, prevention, and treatment of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women since the organization's last position statement in 2010

CLEVELAND, Ohio (Sept 1, 2021)—The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) has announced the release of “Management of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women: the 2021 position statement of The North American Menopause Society.” This new position statement reflects the latest thinking and findings regarding risk factors and available risk-assessment tools for identifying women who are candidates for pharmacologic therapy, as well as clarification of appropriate intakes of calcium, vitamin D, and protein to maintain bone health.

NAMS released its last position statement on osteoporosis in 2010. Since that time, important advances have been made in the assessment, prevention, and treatment of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women. For example, a preparation containing conjugated estrogens combined with bazedoxifene, rather than a progestin, received approval for osteoporosis prevention, as did three targeted therapies, including two bone-building drugs, for the treatment of women with osteoporosis at high risk of fracture.

According to Dr. Michael McClung, a member of the NAMS board and Co-Lead of the Editorial Panel for the 2021 Osteoporosis Position Statement, NAMS reviewed data on these therapies, as well as on emerging treatment modalities, when drafting its findings. “Education regarding a woman’s skeletal health risks is critical during the menopause transition,” says Dr. McClung. “The recommendations made in the updated position statement include strategies designed to minimize bone loss as a way to prevent fractures and help women maintain mobility and independence.”

Highlights from the 2021 position statement on osteoporosis management include

- Approximately half of women aged 50 years will experience a fracture related to osteoporosis in their lifetimes, often resulting in significant symptoms and impairment of function and quality of life, but the disorder is substantially underdiagnosed and undertreated.
- Estrogen deficiency at menopause is the primary cause of bone loss that leads to osteoporosis.
- Even with optimal general measures such as good nutrition and regular physical activity, osteoporosis progresses with advancing age unless it is treated. Because there is no cure for osteoporosis, life-long management is required once the diagnosis has been made.

- Hormone therapy is the most appropriate choice to prevent bone loss at the time of menopause for healthy women, particularly those who have menopause symptoms.
- Bone mineral density measured while on treatment correlates with the patient's current risk of fracture, providing justification for the use of the T-score at the hip as an appropriate clinical target guiding choices of therapy.
- Although antiremodeling drugs such as bisphosphonates and denosumab are the drugs chosen to treat most patients with osteoporosis, a new paradigm of beginning treatment with a bone-building agent followed by an antiremodeling agent is recommended for women at very high risk of fracture.

“This new position statement on osteoporosis provides clinicians with a practical guide to assessing and managing bone health in postmenopausal women and emphasizes an individualized approach with regular follow-up and adjustment based on changing clinical needs and patient preference,” says Dr. Stephanie Faubion, NAMS medical director.

“Management of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women: the 2021 position statement of The North American Menopause Society” can be viewed at (<http://www.menopause.org/docs/default-source/professional/2021-osteoporosis-position-statement.pdf>). For more information about menopause and healthy aging, visit www.menopause.org.

Founded in 1989, The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) is North America's leading nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the health and quality of life of all women during midlife and beyond through an understanding of menopause and healthy aging. Its multidisciplinary membership of 2,000 leaders in the field—including clinical and basic science experts from medicine, nursing, sociology, psychology, nutrition, anthropology, epidemiology, pharmacy, and education—makes NAMS uniquely qualified to serve as the definitive resource for health professionals and the public for accurate, unbiased information about menopause and healthy aging. To learn more about NAMS, visit www.menopause.org.