

## **Source: The North American Menopause Society**

**NOT TO BE RELEASED UNTIL: Monday, 12/14/09 – 9:00 a.m. EST**

### **North American Menopause Society (NAMS) Consumer Survey Suggests Need for Improved Communication between Women and their OB/GYNs about Osteoporosis**

**CLEVELAND, OH, DECEMBER 14, 2009** – According to a new survey distributed by The North American Menopause Society (NAMS), while 98 percent of women who participated consider bone strength to be an important health concern, nearly half (45 percent) of these women reported that osteoporosis was not addressed during their last routine OB/GYN visit, and more than a quarter (26.4 percent) of women surveyed have *never* discussed osteoporosis with their OB/GYN. More than 880 women completed the NAMS consumer survey which assessed how they discuss osteoporosis with their OB/GYNs.

“The potential for rapid bone loss in women over the age of 45, approaching menopause should be a concern, but unfortunately osteoporosis can be overlooked since it is often a ‘silent’ disease until a fracture occurs,” said NAMS Executive Director, Wulf H. Utian, MD, PhD, DSc(Med). “We hope the results of this survey will encourage improved dialogue between women and their OB/GYNs to help prevent unnecessary fractures.”

During the first five years after reaching menopause, women lose an average of 10 percent of their bone mass, making them more susceptible to osteoporosis. However, this survey showed that less than 10 percent of women reported being informed by their OB/GYNs that broken bones after menopause could be a sign of osteoporosis.

Studies have shown that in the U.S. over 70 percent of osteoporosis-related fractures and 94 percent of fracture costs are associated with non-spinal fractures. However, only 10 percent of women surveyed reported that their OB/GYNs have discussed the importance of preventing breaks in non-spinal bones.

The national survey results provided further insights into how women communicate with their OB/GYNs about osteoporosis.

- Almost half (46.8 percent) of women reported that they have never discussed *their own personal risk* of osteopenia or osteoporosis with their OB/GYN.
- Only a quarter of women reported that their OB/GYNs have told them that if left untreated, osteoporosis can lead to broken bones.
- While 62.5 percent of women reported that their OB/GYN has recommended a bone density test, 26.8 percent of women surveyed have never had one.
- Of the 45 women who experienced a broken bone over the past five years, in sites commonly associated with osteoporosis (hip, spine, wrist, collarbone, arm, leg, pelvis), more than half (35 women) reported that their OB/GYN was unaware of this broken bone.
- While the majority of women surveyed reported that their OB/GYNs have told them that broken bones could be a consequence of osteoporosis, other potential consequences were not as well known, including loss of height, dowager’s hump and disability or immobility.

A variety of doctors might diagnose and treat women for osteoporosis, but it is not specific to any one type of doctor or specialty. The goal of this survey was to determine how osteoporosis is being addressed by OB/GYNs specifically, as they are often the primary healthcare provider for women around the time of menopause when the risk of osteoporosis begins to increase.

(more)

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“Women need to make the connection between menopause and osteoporosis to ensure they are asking the right questions and sharing the right information with their OB/GYNs. NAMS can play a key role in this education,” said Dr. Utian.

More information on menopause, osteoporosis and this survey can be found on the NAMS web site at: [www.menopause.org](http://www.menopause.org). The survey results will also be published in an upcoming edition of the NAMS consumer e-newsletter, *Menopause Flashes*.

This survey was conducted by The North American Menopause Society and sponsored by the Alliance for Better Bone Health, an alliance between Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and sanofi-aventis U.S.

### **About the Survey**

The online survey was fielded via email to subscribers of The North American Menopause Society consumer e-newsletter, *Menopause Flashes*. The survey, which included 21 closed-ended questions, was deployed on September 24, 2009 and the deadline for responses was October 31. Emails were sent to a total of 27,895 subscribers to *Menopause Flashes* and 1,627 responses were collected. From the pool of respondents, a total of 881 U.S. women currently under the care of an OB/GYN completed the survey. Of those, 857 were either peri- or post-menopausal at the time of the survey. Additionally, 94.2 percent (n=830) of respondents who completed the survey were age 46 or older at the time of the survey. In order to increase the response rate, women were given the opportunity to voluntarily enter themselves into a drawing for one of 10 Spa Finder gift certificates worth \$100 each. Women who did not wish to enter the drawing were not required to participate.

### **About Osteoporosis**

Osteoporosis is a silent disease that affects millions of postmenopausal women, making their bones weak and more likely to fracture over time. In fact, in the U.S. today, 8 million women are estimated to already have osteoporosis, and almost 27 million more are estimated to have low bone mass, placing them at increased risk for fracture. It is estimated that women experience more osteoporosis-related fractures every year than have heart attacks, strokes, and breast cancer combined. The good news is that there are prescription medications available that effectively reduce both spinal and non-spinal fracture risk.

### **About The North American Menopause Society**

Founded in 1989, The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) is North America's leading independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting women's health and quality of life through an understanding of menopause. Its multidisciplinary membership of 2,000 leaders in the field – including clinical and basic science experts from medicine, nursing, sociology, psychology, anthropology, pharmacy, epidemiology, nutrition, and education – allows NAMS to be the preeminent resource on all aspects of menopause to both healthcare providers and the public.

### **About the Alliance for Better Bone Health**

*The Alliance for Better Bone Health* was formed in May 1997 to promote bone health and disease awareness through numerous activities to support physicians and patients around the globe. It is a collaboration between Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and sanofi-aventis U.S.

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