Osteoporosis--a neglected issue in orthopaedics? Results of a survey amongst German orthopaedic surgeons

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Hube R, Käfer W, Klima S, Hein W, Puhl W, Dreinhöfer KE

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Abstract

AIM: Patients with fragility fractures have a significantly increased risk of sustaining additional fractures. Therefore one should consider avoidance of further fractures as the primary treatment principle. Since orthopaedic surgeons manage most of fragility fractures, but might not be well attuned to osteoporosis itself, it was the aim of the Bone and Joint Decade (BJD) and the International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) to survey orthopaedic surgeons in order to assess their knowledge of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of osteoporosis.

MATERIAL AND METHODS: The multinational survey questionnaire was developed by a working group of national project co-ordinators in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand and based to some extent on an American survey. Following translation into the national language it was distributed in 2002 to the members of the orthopaedic societies to assess the management of prevention, diagnosis, and therapy of osteoporosis and fragility fractures, comparing both different health-care systems and different working environments. 5 700 questionnaires were distributed in Germany with a 20 percent response rate.

RESULTS: As the main result of the German survey -- independent of the working environment -- a substantial deficit concerning training and knowledge about the management of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of osteoporosis and fragility fractures was seen. In addition, the majority of participants requested educational opportunities to become qualified for a better disease control.

CONCLUSION: In order to satisfy the increasing need for adequate management of prevention, diagnosis, and therapy of osteoporosis and fragility fractures, structured educational opportunities have to be offered to the German orthopaedic community. In the mean time first steps have been
Results of the 477,945 patients in the cohort 49% visited orthopaedic surgeons for injury, and 24% for arthritis. Overall, 79.3% did not receive surgery within 18 months of the initial visit, which varied somewhat by diagnosis at first visit (84.5% for injury and 73.0% for arthritis) with highest proportions in the 0–24 and 25–44 age groups. The distribution by income quintile of patients visiting was skewed towards higher incomes. It is also compatible with surveys of Ontario Orthopaedic Surgeons that showed half of a surgeons' time was spent in office-based care [10].