

FOREWORD

As of 1999, the WHO has recognized osteoporosis as a major public health problem and included it on the priority list of non-communicable diseases. Because of the demographic explosion worldwide, osteoporosis is incurring a staggering social and economic toll on society. International guidelines on osteoporosis have been put forth and refined over the years, in light of the substantial body of evidence from large prospective studies.

In an effort to optimize the quality of care of osteoporosis in Lebanon, an initiative was launched in Beirut in the spring of 2002, and led to the development of the “Lebanese Guidelines for Osteoporosis Assessment and Treatment”. These guidelines were endorsed by five Lebanese societies and the Eastern Mediterranean branch of the World Health Organization. The endorsing societies were the Lebanese Society of Endocrinology, the Lebanese Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology, the Lebanese Association of Orthopedics, the Lebanese Society of Radiology, and the Lebanese Society of Rheumatology. These guidelines were featured in a special issue of the Lebanese Medical Journal, the 5th of its kind, in line with the continuing medical education mission of the Journal, [LMJ May-June 2002 ; 50 (3)]. Subsequently, a dissemination effort was implemented in 2005 through 10 case-based interactive sessions conducted in Beirut, Tripoli, Jounieh, Zahleh, and Saida, attended by over 500 physicians. The effort for the development of the Lebanese Guidelines was the nucleus for the foundation of the Lebanese Society of Osteoporosis and Metabolic Bone Disorders, OSTEOS, a multidisciplinary scientific society, and a member society of the Lebanese Order of Physicians.

The Lebanese Osteoporosis Guidelines were developed recognizing the need for periodic updates, in light of local and international new data. This first Update for these guidelines was launched on April 30, 2006. Revisited guidelines included recommendations regarding the normative database to be used, the specific skeletal sites to be evaluated, recommendations in men and recommendations in premenopausal women. The experts also sought an evaluation of the relevance of the specific risk factors, used in the WHO fracture risk assessment model, to fracture risk assessment in the Lebanese. The initiative was spearheaded by local experts from OSTEOS and attended by international experts : Professor Juliet Compston, Professor of Bone Diseases, Cambridge University School of Medicine and a renowned authority on guidelines development ; Professor John Kanis, Emeritus Professor University of Sheffield, Director World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Metabolic Bone Disorders and the lead investigator spearheading the WHO initiative for osteoporosis global risk assessment ; and Dr Michael McClung, Director Oregon Osteoporosis Center and the lead investigator on many osteoporosis multicenter trials. The Update was discussed in a closed meeting between founding members of OSTEOS and the international expert panel, and then discussed in an open meeting with members of the five founding societies on April 30, 2006. It was subsequently endorsed by these societies and by the Lebanese Ministry of Health. This special issue contains the final document of the Update as posted amongst International Osteoporosis Guidelines on the website of the International Osteoporosis Foundation, and the proceedings of the launch of the Update April 30, 2006.

The national data used in the Update is the fruit of a continued collaborative effort between investigators at the American University of Beirut and at the St Joseph University, founding members of OSTEOS. This Update lays the ground to align the Lebanese Guidelines for Osteoporosis with the WHO initiative on global fracture risk assessment. The support granted by the Lebanese Order of Physicians, the World Health Organization, and the Lebanese Ministry of Health are instrumental to the success of this continuing national endeavor that aims to optimize quality care in the field of osteoporosis in Lebanon.

This Fall issue of the Lebanese Medical Journal is quite timely in view of the launch of World Osteoporosis Day Oct 20, 2007 with its theme “Beat the Break”, <http://www.iofbonehealth.org/index.php?id=255>. The year-long campaign will focus on bone health awareness at all ages. In this spirit, OSTEOS will launch a series of sessions across Lebanon to increase osteoporosis awareness and promote the first Update of the Lebanese Osteoporosis Guidelines amongst practitioners to enhance the detection and appropriate treatment of high risk subjects.

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