

Fractures significantly reduce quality of life in postmenopausal women

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Two in five women over 50 will suffer a fracture of the hip, spine or wrist that will lead to increased risk of chronic pain, reduced mobility, loss of independence and, in some cases, death.

New research led by a renowned McMaster University rheumatologist has shown that [postmenopausal women](#) who report previous fractures experience a significant reduction in health-related quality of life. The decrease is similar or worse than that experienced by patients with diabetes, arthritis, [lung disease](#) and other chronic illnesses.

"Our study shows that the effects of fractures result in significant reductions in quality of life that are as lasting and as disabling as other chronic conditions," said Rick Adachi, a professor of medicine in the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine at McMaster and the holder of the Alliance for Better [Bone Health](#) Chair in Rheumatology. "As important, this study shows the greater the number of fractures, the greater the disability. This suggests that efforts are needed to prevent fractures from occurring."

The research findings, published online in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, are the latest to emerge from the Global Longitudinal Study of Osteoporosis in Women (GLOW).

GLOW is a large international, observational study of women 55 years of age and older who are at risk of fractures. Nearly 60,000 women are participating in GLOW worldwide, including 3,985 in Hamilton, the

only Canadian site of the study. GLOW gathers information on fracture [risk factors](#), treatments, patient behaviors and fracture outcomes over a five-year period.

To examine the impact of common fractures on quality of life, the study authors administered health surveys to 57,141 postmenopausal women in 10 countries in Europe, North America and Australia. The surveys measured five dimensions of health (mobility, self-care, usual activities, pain or discomfort, and anxiety or depression) as well as overall health status, physical function and vitality of participants.

The study found that spine, hip and upper leg fractures resulted in the greatest decrease in quality of life. For the Canadian site of GLOW, Adachi and his team found that 22 per cent of participants reported previous fractures.

"The results of this large international, observational study demonstrate the significant effects that fractures of a variety of bones have on postmenopausal women's health-related quality of life," the study authors wrote.

"Notwithstanding improvements in medical management of fractures, women with fractures continue to have lower health-related quality of life, and these impairments need to be addressed."

Provided by McMaster University

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