

# Fractures significantly reduce quality of life in women with osteoporosis

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Researchers seeking to understand the impact of osteoporosis and fractures on various aspects of health have found that women who had previous fractures experienced a significant reduction in health-related quality of life similar to or worse than that experienced by patients with diabetes, arthritis, lung disease and other chronic illnesses. This latest study from the Global Longitudinal Study of Osteoporosis in Women (GLOW), which is based at the Center for Outcomes Research at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, was published online, July 15, in the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

Approximately 40 percent of women over 50 will suffer a fracture; the most common sites of fracture are the hip, spine and wrist. These fractures often carry with them chronic pain, reduced mobility, loss of independence, and especially in the case of [hip fracture](#), an increased risk of death. Because the likelihood of fractures increases substantially with older age, fracture numbers are projected to rise as the population ages.

Using a standardized index measuring five dimensions of health (mobility, self-care, usual activities, pain or discomfort, and anxiety or depression), the study authors administered health surveys to nearly 60,000 postmenopausal women in 10 countries. The surveys were used to compare the overall health status, physical function and vitality of participants and assess health-related quality of life. The study found that spine, hip and upper leg fractures resulted in the greatest decrease in quality of life.

"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. As important, the greater the number of fractures, the greater the disability," said the lead author of the paper, Jonathan D. Adachi, MD, GLOW investigator and the Alliance for Better Bone Health Chair in Rheumatology at St. Joseph's Healthcare and McMaster University in Ontario. "This suggests that efforts are needed to prevent [fractures](#) from occurring."

## Study Details

GLOW is a prospective, international cohort study of women 55 years of age and older who visited their primary care physician during the 2 years prior to enrollment in the study. Over 60,000 women were recruited by more than 700 primary care physicians in 17 cities in 10 countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom and United States). In GLOW, information is being gathered on fracture risk factors, treatments, patient behaviors, and fracture outcomes over a 5-year period.

Provided by University of Massachusetts Medical School

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