

# Osteoporosis fractures significantly reduce quality of life

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Women who suffer fractures from osteoporosis experience a significant reduction in their quality of life similar to or worse than that of patients with diabetes, arthritis, lung disease and other chronic illnesses.

University of Sydney researchers studying the impact of [fractures](#) from osteoporosis have found female sufferers experienced a significant reduction in their quality of life similar to or worse than that of patients with diabetes, arthritis, lung disease and other chronic illnesses.

The researchers contributed data to the latest international study by the Global Longitudinal Study of [Osteoporosis](#) in Women (GLOW), which is based at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. The results are published online in the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings journal*.

Dr Philip Sambrook, Professor of Rheumatology at Sydney Medical School and co-author of the article enrolled 2904 women in the GLOW survey.

Dr Sambrook said of these participants, 25 percent had a previous fracture.

"Nearly 60,000 women are participating in GLOW worldwide," he said.

"Approximately 40 percent of women over 50 will suffer a fracture and the most common sites 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 standardised index measuring five dimensions of health (mobility, self-care, usual activities, pain or discomfort, anxiety and 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, vitality of participants and assess their health-related quality of life.

Dr Sambrook said the study found that spine, hip and upper leg fractures resulted in the greatest decrease in quality of life.

"Our study showed that fractures result in significant reductions in quality of life, that are as lasting and as disabling as other chronic conditions," he said.

"We also found the greater the number of fractures, the greater the disability. This suggests that efforts are needed to prevent fractures from occurring."

GLOW is an international study of women 55 years of age and older who visited their primary care physician during the two 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). Information is being gathered on fracture risk factors, treatments, patient behaviors, and fracture outcomes over a five-year period.

**More information:** doi: [10.4065/mcp.2010.0082](https://doi.org/10.4065/mcp.2010.0082)

Provided by University of Sydney

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