

New study quantifies the enormous cost of fragility fractures in Europe

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Researchers at the European Congress of Osteoporosis & Osteoarthritis in Bordeaux have presented new data* which shows that the economic burden of fragility fractures in the 27 member states of the European Union far exceeds previous estimates, with hip fractures accounting for around 55% of costs.

The investigators used a population based model to estimate the economic burden of [fractures](#) in 2010, using data on fracture incidence, costs for pharmaceutical prevention and post-fracture health care, mortality, and population size to estimate total costs. Data for hip, vertebral, wrist, "other fractures" were included and a societal perspective was used as far as possible. Costs were divided into cost of fractures occurring within the index year, cost of prior historic fractures that still are associated with costs, and cost of pharmaceutical prevention.

The total economic burden, including pharmaceutical prevention, of fractures in the European Union in 2010 was estimated at €39 billion EUR. The highest costs were in the EU's five largest countries – Germany (9.3 billion), Italy (7.2 billion), UK (5.6 billion), France (5 billion), Spain (2.9 billion).

The direct costs of treating new fractures accounted for €26 billion EUR, long-term fracture care €11 billion and pharmaceutical prevention only €2 billion. Excluding pharmaceutical prevention [costs](#), hip, vertebral, wrist and "other fractures" comprised 55%, 5%, 1% and 38%

of the economic burden respectively.

John A. Kanis, Professor Emeritus at the University of Sheffield, WHO Collaborating Centre, and lead author of the study, concluded, "We have found that pharmaceutical prevention of fractures only accounts for 2 billion EUR in expenditure – approximately 5% of the total cost burden of fractures. This small investment in prevention and treatment reflects the fact that [osteoporosis](#), which is most often the underlying cause of [fragility fractures](#), is neither being assessed nor treated in the majority of people at high risk."

The [economic burden](#) of fractures in the European Union is expected to grow as the number of seniors increases in Europe. Studies have estimated that the number of fractures will more than double by 2050 unless preventive action is taken.

More information: * The economic burden of fractures in the European Union in 2010. Kanis JA, Compston J, Cooper C et al. *Osteoporos Int* Vol 23 (2012), Supplement 2 (Abstract 0C1)

Provided by International Osteoporosis Foundation

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