

COVID-19 patients with spinal fractures are twice as likely to die

October 21 2020



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Patients with COVID-19 and vertebral fractures are twice as likely to die from the disease, according to a study published in the Endocrine Society's *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

Vertebral fractures occur when the bony block or vertebral body in the spine collapses, which can lead to [severe pain](#), deformity and loss of height. These fractures are typically caused by osteoporosis (weak, brittle bones). Vertebral fractures are prevalent in COVID-19 patients and can influence cardiorespiratory function and disease outcomes.

"Vertebral fractures are a marker of frailty, and for the first time we show that individuals who have such fractures appear to be at increased risk of severe COVID-19," said the study's corresponding author, Andrea Giustina, M.D., Director of the Institute of Endocrine and Metabolic Sciences of the San Raffaele Vita-Salute University and IRCCS San Raffaele Hospital in Milano, Italy. "A simple thoracic X-ray can detect these fractures and morphometric evaluation should be performed in COVID-19 patients at hospital admission."

The researchers studied the x-rays of 114 COVID-19 patients and detected thoracic [vertebral fractures](#) in 35 percent. These patients were older and more affected by [high blood pressure](#) and heart disease. They were more likely to need ventilators and were twice as likely to die compared to those without fractures. The death rate was higher in [patients](#) with severe fractures.

More information: "Radiological Thoracic Vertebral Fractures are Highly Prevalent in COVID-19 and Predict Disease Outcomes," *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* (2020).

Provided by The Endocrine Society

Citation: COVID-19 patients with spinal fractures are twice as likely to die (2020, October 21)
retrieved 2 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-10-covid-patients-spinal-fractures-die.html>

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