

# New benchmark set to deliver optimal osteoporosis care throughout Asia Pacific

January 27 2021



**APCO**  
ASIA PACIFIC CONSORTIUM  
ON OSTEOPOROSIS

## The APCO Framework

**SITUATION**

- Between 2010 & 2050 pop. aged ≥60 in APAC is predicted to triple to **1.3 billion people**
- APAC is home to **>1/3 of the world's population aged ≥ 65 years**
- 5/6 of patients** with a fragility fracture who present for care will not be:
  - Assessed for osteoporosis
  - Appropriately managed to prevent further fracture
- Significant disparity in APAC osteoporosis guidelines demonstrates need for new benchmark of minimal clinical standards for provision of optimal osteoporosis care

**METHODOLOGY**

- 51Q analysis & Delphi Consensus process employed to inform development of The APCO Framework

**SOLUTION**

- The 1st pan-Asia Pacific clinical practice standards for the screening, diagnosis & management of osteoporosis, targeting a broad range of high-risk groups
- The Framework's 16 minimum clinical standards:
  - 'Identification' for assessment
  - 'Information' for self-care
  - 'Investigations' required
  - 'Integration' of healthcare systems for optimal provision of care
  - 'Indication' for interventions
  - Ongoing improvement in provision of 'quality' of care

**ACTION**

- Encourage development of new clinical practice guidelines, or revision of existing guidelines for greater consistency across the region

DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE APCO FRAMEWORK & CLINICAL STANDARDS:

[www.apcobonehealth.org](http://www.apcobonehealth.org) [secretariat@apcobonehealth.org](mailto:secretariat@apcobonehealth.org) [asia-pacific-consortium-on-osteoporosis](https://www.linkedin.com/company/asia-pacific-consortium-on-osteoporosis)

The first pan-Asia Pacific clinical practice standards for the screening, diagnosis and management of osteoporosis, targeting a broad range of high-risk groups  
Credit: The Asia Pacific Consortium on Osteoporosis (APCO)

The Asia Pacific Consortium on Osteoporosis (APCO) has today launched the first pan-Asia Pacific clinical practice standards for the screening, diagnosis, and management of osteoporosis, targeting a broad range of high-risk groups.

Published in *Osteoporosis International* today, 'The APCO Framework' comprises 16 minimum clinical standards set to serve as a benchmark for the provision of optimal osteoporosis care in the region.

Developed by APCO members representing key osteoporosis stakeholders, and multiple medical and surgical specialities, this set of clear, concise, relevant and pragmatic clinical standards aims to support national societies, guidelines development authorities, and health care policy makers with the development of new guidelines, and to encourage the revision of existing guidelines.

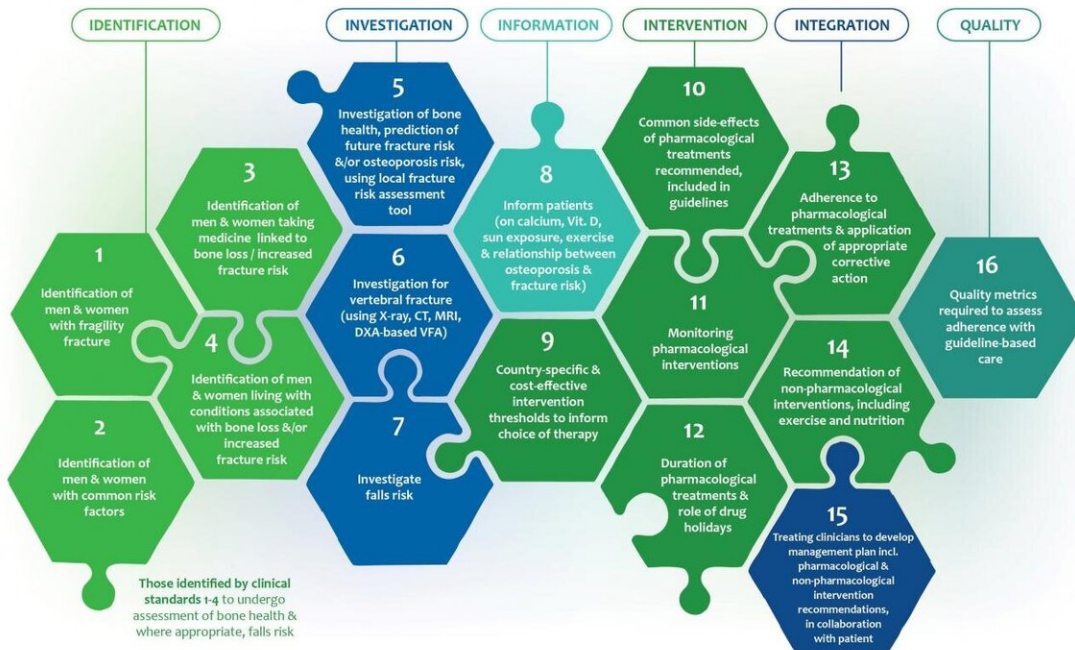
According to the Framework lead author, APCO Chairperson, and Director of the Osteoporosis and Bone Metabolism Unit at Singapore General Hospital, Dr. Manju Chandran, Singapore, APCO employed a 5IQ analysis and the well-established Delphi Consensus process to analyse the 18 clinical practice guidelines currently available in the Asia Pacific region, to inform the development of The APCO Framework.

"Utilising a comprehensive, four-round Delphi consensus method enabled our APCO members who work in vastly different health care systems, to reach a remarkable level of consensus on a benchmark set of clinical standards for the provision of quality osteoporosis care for the Asia Pacific region."

The APCO Framework offers clinicians structured, well-articulated, and readily accessible clinical practice guidelines that define:

## The APCO Framework Clinical Standards

1ST SET OF MINIMUM CLINICAL STANDARDS (16) FOR THE SCREENING, DIAGNOSIS & MANAGEMENT OF OSTEOPOROSIS



DOWNLOAD THE COMPLETE APCO FRAMEWORK & CLINICAL STANDARDS:

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16 minimum clinical standards for the screening, diagnosis and management of osteoporosis Credit: The Asia Pacific Consortium on Osteoporosis (APCO)

- Individuals to be identified for assessment;
- Investigations required;
- Relevant indications for treatment;
- Appropriate selection of interventions to be made;
- The guidance and information patients need for self-care;
- Integration of healthcare systems for optimal provision of care;
- and
- The need, and methods for monitoring and improving the quality

of osteoporosis care.

"Implementation of The APCO Framework, or a similar set of standards of care informed by the Framework, is expected to significantly reduce the burden of osteoporosis not only in the Asia Pacific region, but also worldwide. We hope that the Framework can serve as a stimulus for harmonization of guidelines in other regions that have similar socio-economic diversity and heterogeneity of health care resources," Dr. Chandran said.

Globally, the population aged 65 years or over increased from six per cent in 1990, to nine per cent in 2019. This proportion is projected to rise to 16 per cent by 2050,<sup>1</sup> meaning one in six people worldwide will be aged 65 years or over by 2050. The number of people aged 60 years and over in the Asia-Pacific region—home to more than a third of the world's population aged 65 years and over, and to more elderly people than any other region—is predicted to triple between 2010 and 2050, reaching a staggering 1.3 billion people.

Osteoporotic [fractures](#) among Asia-Pacific populations are expected to increase exponentially, not only because of the region's rapidly aging population, but also due to mounting urbanization, and the subsequent increase in sedentary lifestyles.

Despite the presence of generally safe and effective treatments for osteoporosis, as many as five in six patients presenting to their primary care physician (PCP), or to a hospital with a fragility fracture, will not be assessed for osteoporosis, nor appropriately managed to prevent further fracture.

According to Medical Director of Osteoporosis Australia, and APCO Executive Committee member, Professor Peter Ebeling AO, Australia, as many as half of those who have sustained a hip fracture, have already



experienced a previous fracture at other skeletal sites.



Asia Pacific Consortium on Osteoporosis (APCO) Credit: The Asia Pacific Consortium on Osteoporosis (APCO)

"In fact, a prior fracture at any site is associated with a doubling of future fracture and mortality risk. The unfortunate ramifications of the gross under-diagnosis and under-treatment of osteoporosis is that a large number of people sustain further debilitating secondary fractures, which

places a substantial, but importantly, preventable burden on already strained healthcare systems," said Prof Ebeling.

A fragility fracture, which occurs every three seconds worldwide, [6] compromises quality of life and loss of independence. [6,7] Concerningly, one-in-four patients who sustain a hip fracture die within a year, and less than half of those who survive, regain their previous level of function. In 2010, an estimated 158 million people aged 50 years and above were at high risk for osteoporotic fracture—a figure which is set to double by 2040.[10]

According to International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF) CEO and APCO Executive Committee member, Dr. Philippe Halbout, Switzerland, these alarming statistics, coupled with the anticipated, exponential rise in [osteoporotic fractures](#) among Asia-Pacific populations, warrant a standardized set of minimum clinical standards for the region.

"Anecdotal evidence to date reveals significant inconsistencies in osteoporosis clinical practice guidelines in the Asia Pacific region, which vary widely in scope and recommendations. This was confirmed when we analyzed the 18 guidelines."

"Implementation of the minimum clinical standards proposed by The APCO Framework, and reform of existing guidelines, will support clinical improvement initiatives, while also paving the way for a more holistic approach to [osteoporosis](#) care, and ultimately, greater consistency across all national and regional clinical practice guidelines in the [region](#)," Dr. Halbout said.

**More information:** Development of the Asia Pacific Consortium on Osteoporosis (APCO) Framework: clinical standards of care for the screening, diagnosis, and management of osteoporosis in the Asia-

Pacific region, *Osteoporosis International* (2021). DOI: [10.1007/s00198-020-05742-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00198-020-05742-0)

Provided by International Osteoporosis Foundation

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