

Healthcare Services SIG

The Medical SIG has continued to grow and develop, during the last few months. We have had a couple of SIG meetings which were very well attended. I have pleasure in introducing Dr. Mohammed Al Shaker to be our guest author for the Summer issue of the RGGB magazine.



Philip Taylor
SIG Chairman,
Healthcare Services

Dr Al Shaker is a Senior Orthopaedic Consultant for the Department of Family Medicine at the King Faisal Hospital and Research center. With a particular interest in Osteoporosis his article will be of great interest to many. Dr. Al Shaker is both a national and international speaker on the subject of Osteoporosis and is the Vice President of Saudi Osteoporosis Society. Additional responsibilities for Dr Al Shaker include Quality Improvement within his department to improve patient satisfaction and enhanced patient outcomes.



Dr Al Shaker

I hope that you will find the article of interest and if you have any particular subject for the next magazine issue please contact me. Have a good summer.

Philip Taylor, Chairman, Healthcare SIG

OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis or “Porous bone” is a disease in which the quantity and quality of bone are reduced, leading to fragility of the skeleton with significant increase in fracture risk. The deterioration of Bone occurs progressively and “silently”. Often there are no symptoms until the first fracture occurs.

The most common osteoporotic fractures are spine, hip and wrist fractures, some of these fractures cause untold suffering, lasting disability, and a greatly diminished quality of life.

Spine fractures can cause intense pain, and lead to loss of height and stopped back with gradual loss of movement and inability to carry out daily chores. Hip fractures usually require major surgery. Up to 20% of people die within one year following a hip fracture about third of the survivors will lose their independency and need to transfer to institutional care.

How common is Osteoporosis?

One in three women and one in nine men over the age of 50 years will suffer an osteoporotic fracture. It is a disease that known no geographic or social boundaries’. In USA there is a fragility fracture every 20 seconds and in Europe every 30 seconds. As the world’s population ages and lives longer, the number of osteoporotic fractures is predicted to rise dramatically. By 2050 hip fracture rate in North America and Europe are predicted to double. In Asia they are predicted to increase five folds.

Know your risk factors?

Genetic factors largely determine whether an individual is at heightened risk of osteoporosis. The hormonal changes that take place at menopause are one reason why women are at greater risk than men. In addition life style factors such as poor nutrition lack of exercise, smoking, and excess alcohol intake have negative effect on bone health, as do secondary risk factors such as various medical disorders and their treatment. A simple, short test was developed by the International Osteoporosis Risk test that can help in assessing your risk of this devastating disease.

The more you answer with yes, the more risk you have. However the definite diagnosis of osteoporosis can only be made by a specialist in the lab through a bone density test.

Preventing Osteoporosis:

The best time in life to ensure bone health for the future is while we are still young. This doesn’t mean, however, that we cannot contribute positively to our bone health later on in life, for both purposes. A life style modification will be essential.

Exercise is not just important to health, it helps build bone mass in youth and slows bone loss in adults. Of particular importance for bone health is weight-bearing exercise like walking, jogging, aerobics, dancing, tennis, etc..

Nutrition:

Both calcium and vitamin D are essential to maintain healthy bone. As we grow older we absorb calcium from food less efficiently, this is why that-over time- we need higher amount of calcium.

The most readily available sources of dietary calcium include dairy food, nuts, some green vegetables (broccoli, kale and bok choy), small canned fish with soft bones “e.g. sardines” and calcium-set tofu.

Vitamin D: which helps calcium absorption is also essential. The major source of vitamin D is the photosynthesis in the skin through exposure to sunlight. However most of the people suffer from vitamin D deficiency because of lack of exposure to sun light either because they live in high altitude countries or because they stay away from the sun in sunny countries.