

Argus Orthopaedic Zone

Bone Loss and Antidepressants! Bad Company

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Studies have shown that 20% of older patient suffer from depression. Depression is not in itself a normal part of aging. The rate of depression increases to 50% among patients living in nursing homes.

What does this have to do with Orthopaedic Surgery you ask?

Answer: A lot! Read on.

A troubling association is present between depression, a type of drug used to treat depression and increased fractures and bone loss. This is a very unhappy triangle.

Serotonin

Antidepressant drugs in this class of antidepressant medication ensure that the brain gets enough Serotonin, which can improve your mood and overall health. The five antidepressant drugs in this class are Lexapro, Zoloft, Paxil, Prozac and Celexa. These drugs have always been known to have side effects in some patients. Nausea, dizziness, fatigue and headaches.

Side Effects on Bones

Several large studies in the last five years have indicated that there is a significant decrease in bone density and an increased risk of fracture in older patients who take these drugs. This includes not only vertebral (spine) fractures, but fractures in other parts of the body also.

Options

First of all let me say that everyone who takes one of these antidepressants does not automatically get bone loss. You and your doctor have to weigh the benefits against the risks.

Your doctor might want to give you an antidepressant drug in a different class than the five mentioned if there is concern about bone

loss. There are at least 2 other classes of antidepressants that do not cause bone loss.

What You Can Do

To increase bone density and strength:

- Get 1000 i.u. of Vitamin D per day
- Get 1,500mg of Calcium per day from food and supplements
- Engage in some type of weight bearing exercise each day for 30 minutes if possible
- Don't smoke
- Limit alcohol to no more than 2 drinks per day

Hopefully, this sounds really familiar if you have been reading my articles!

Just Do It

Researchers will continue to investigate the connection between bone loss, fractures and antidepressants.

You need to take the initiative and protect yourself with Calcium and Vitamin D and any other medication your doctor prescribes to promote bone health. Add to this daily exercise, moderate alcohol intake and no smoking.

For much more information about all the Orthopaedic Surgery and musculoskeletal problems I treat in the office and hospital log onto our office teaching website www.orthopodsurgeon.com that can take you to Your Orthopaedic Connection.

As always our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free, functional lives.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush