



Fracture Risk Assessment Calculator now available to Lebanese patients

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Lebanon became the first country in the Arab region to offer clinicians a new prognostic tool allowing them to assess the 10-year fracture risk of Lebanese patients worldwide, thanks to an AUB-led effort.

The Fracture Risk Assessment calculator, or FRAX, is a free prognostic online tool developed in 2008 by the World Health Organization to evaluate the fracture risk of patients based on several clinical risk factors in addition to bone mineral density. American University of Beirut doctors and researchers have developed a tool specific to Lebanese patients, or FRAX Lebanon, after analyzing data provided by the Lebanese Ministry of Health.

FRAX Lebanon was announced at the annual meeting of the Lebanese Society for Osteoporosis and Metabolic Bone Disorders, OSTEOS, which was held on October 30-31, 2009 at Beirut's Bristol Hotel.

With FRAX Lebanon, doctors at AUBMC and in the region will be able to assess the fracture risk of Lebanese patients and patients of similar characteristics and thus offer the best preventative chronic care to patients at risk of osteoporosis, which hits one in three women and one in five men worldwide. It will also help clinicians better identify women and men in need of intervention, thereby improving the allocation of limited healthcare resources.

FRAX Lebanon was the result of a collaborative effort led by Dr. Ghada El-Hajj Fuleihan, professor of medicine and director of the Calcium Metabolism and Osteoporosis Program at AUB; and the FRAX WHO team, consisting of professors John Kanis and Eugene McCloskey. Health Minister Mohammed Jawad Khalifeh commended El-Hajj Fuleihan, who is the president of the OSTEOS Society, and all FRAX Lebanon collaborators for their endeavors, underscoring FRAX Lebanon's potential in improving the management of osteoporosis patients in Lebanon and in helping focus treatment strategies on high risk patients.

Highlights of the meeting included presentations—"Hypovitaminosis D" by Dr. El-Hajj Fuleihan, "Epidemiology of Osteoporosis in the Middle East" by Dr. Baddoura; "Hormone Replacement Therapy in 2009" by Dr. Seoud, and "Hormone Ablation and Fractures in Cancer Patients" by Dr Halaby. Lectures by international speakers dealt with bone physiology, quality, and formation; genetics and secondary causes of osteoporosis, hip fractures, and other pertinent issues.

Dr. Jad Okais, who chaired the organizing committee, noted that over 230 people from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Tunis, and Egypt, and from various specialties including endocrinology, rheumatology, obstetrics and gynecology, radiology, orthopedics, and family medicine, had registered for the meeting.