Medical Xpress

Young people with inflammatory bowel diseases are at increased risk of fracture

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A team of scientists from the University Hospitals of Geneva and Lausanne have shown that young people with inflammatory bowel diseases have low bone mass and poor bone architecture compared to healthy people of the same age, placing them at increased risk of fracture.

Inflammatory bowel disease is a general term referring to any disease characterized by inflammation of the bowel. Two of the most common disorders are Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Patients with these disorders are at increased risk for bone loss and osteoporotic fractures, due to a variety of factors including poor absorption of nutrients by the damaged intestine (including calcium, vitamin D, protein) and treatment with glucocorticoid medications.

The findings presented at the World Congress on Osteoporosis 2010 (IOF WCO-ECCEO10), currently taking place in Florence, Italy until May 8, 2010, show that the increased fracture risk during growth is due not just to lower BMD, but to changes in the microarchitecture of the trabecular bone tissue. Trabecular bone (also known as cancellous or 'spongy' bone) is the less dense and stiff part of bone that typically occurs at the ends of long bones, close to joints and within the interior of the spine. Doctors treating younger people with inflammatory bowel diseases need to include prevention measures in the overall care strategy, including ensuring an adequate calcium and vitamin D intake either through diet or supplements, and attention to adequate weight-bearing exercise.

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