Risk of fracture with alendronic acid

The Pharmacovigilance Unit, Health Sciences Authority, has recently received 25 reports of fractures and one of delayed bone healing in patients receiving long-term alendronic acid.

The adverse events were noted in female patients who had received alendronic acid for 1–10 years (duration was reported in 22 patients) with a median age of 66.5 years (range 37–82 years). Bone Mineral Density T-scores were recorded in only 12 patients, and ranged from 1.29 to −2.8. Seven patients reported pain in the fractured limb up to 4 months prior to sustaining the fracture. Of the 26 patients, six did not experience any trauma prior to the fracture. Minimal trauma was noted in 10 patients, mainly through falls, and one patient experienced delayed bone healing. The events preceding fracture in nine patients were not reported. The fractures were mostly subtrochanteric. Most of these fractures were simple transverse or short oblique fractures which were described by the reporting physicians as differing from typical osteoporotic fractures.

Health Sciences Authority. Monitoring of patient's bone mineral density recommended before and during drug therapy. Adverse Drug Reaction News 9: 1-2, No. 1, Mar 2007

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