

Glucocorticoid-induced Osteoporosis (GIOP): Challenges and Opportunities

Kenneth G. Saag, M.D. M.Sc.

Jane Knight Lowe Professor of Medicine

Director, Center for Outcomes Effectiveness Research and Education (COERE) and Center for Education and Research on Therapeutics (CERTs) of Musculoskeletal Disorders

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Chronic glucocorticoids are used by over 1% of the population for a variety of serious inflammatory disorders and continue to constitute the most common secondary cause of osteoporosis. Bone loss and osteoporosis risk are mediated by both dose and duration of glucocorticoids. Fractures may also occur somewhat independent of bone loss. Bone effects of glucocorticoids are a function of a shortened life-span of osteoblasts and osteocytes as well

as accelerated bone resorption. Although bisphosphonates have been the best studied therapies for managing GIOP, teriparatide may have superior efficacy on bone density and fracture risk reduction. Strategies to treat GIOP have been supported by a number of recent specialty society guidelines. Efforts to improve the quality of osteoporosis care have targeted the health care provider, the patient and the health system with variable results