Clinical Fractures: What do they mean for patients living with osteoporosis?

The term clinical fracture describes all fractures that come to a patient or doctor's attention based on signs and symptoms that indicate a fracture is present. Clinical fractures can happen anywhere in the skeleton and include both painful vertebral and non-vertebral fractures. Some of the signs and symptoms patients with a clinical fracture may experience include:

- Pain
- Swelling and tenderness
- Deformity
- Loss of function at injured area

A clinical fracture can be a life-changing event, making it harder to get around and do things independently. Beyond the physical impact of clinical fractures, these injuries are also associated with societal cost burden.

Annually, osteoporosis causes ~9M fractures. The clinical burden of osteoporosis is evidenced by hospitalizations and emergency room visits resulting from clinical fractures. This may include both direct medical costs as well as indirect economic costs, such as a person's productivity and a caregiver's time.

Once a person suffers from an initial fracture, the chances of another are MUCH HIGHER. After a clinical fracture, ONE IN THREE OLDER WOMEN will sustain a second fracture within the next five years. Clinical fractures at one site CAN INCREASE THE RISK for a future fracture at a different place in the body.

REFERENCES: