The treatment of osteoporosis is in flux because of a variety of forces, including a substantial increase in the number of aging patients deemed eligible for treatment, said Dr. Barbara Messinger-Rapport, said at the meeting. The assessment tool making a difference is the Web-based Fracture Risk Assessment Tool (FRAX), released by the World Health Organization in 2008. FRAX guides clinicians to consider drug therapy for patients with a 10-year probability of major fracture of 20% or higher. The tool also considers the effect of vitamin D and calcium deficiency on bone mineral density.

“Overall mortality was lower – but not significantly so – among all the subgroups with denosumab. However, there was a significantly lower incidence of fatal adverse events with denosumab vs. placebo in the higher-risk group with prevalent vertebral fracture (1.8% vs. 4.9%) and in those with both prevalent vertebral fracture and low femoral neck BMD (1.6% vs. 7.1%). The difference in mortality among the higher-risk subgroups was greater than that of the lower-risk groups, they noted.”

“Dr. Messinger-Rapport listed contraindications to bisphosphonates as a prior allergic reaction, vitamin D depletion (less than 30 ng/mL), hypocalcemia, dysphagia, esophageal disorders, and severe gastrointestinal reflux disorder.”

“Our analyses highlight the consistency of the antifracture efficacy of denosumab across subjects with differences in a variety of major risk factors for fractures at baseline. Our analyses suggest that denosumab reduces both new vertebral and hip fractures, regardless of the underlying risk and that the higher absolute fracture risk observed in the higher-risk subgroups is associated with greater absolute fracture risk reduction,” Dr. Boonen and his associates concluded.

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