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Low bone density persists in women with diabetes

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NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - The results of a study published in *Diabetes Care* confirm that young women with type 1 diabetes have lower bone mineral densities (BMD) than young women without the disease. These differences also persist over time, especially among those who are older than 20 years.

Dr. Lucy D. Mastrandrea and colleagues from the University at Buffalo, New York, previously reported that young women with type 1 diabetes have a lower BMD than their counterparts of the same age, but without diabetes.

The researchers have now performed a 2-year follow-up study of these women to determine if BMD differences persist over time. Included in the study were 63 women with type 1 diabetes and 85 "control" subjects.

After adjusting the findings for age, body mass index (ratio of weight to height) and oral contraceptive use, BMD continued to be lower in the diabetes patients than the controls after 2 years. The differences in BMD of the hip and thigh bone were statistically significant between the two groups.

Diabetic women younger than 20 years of age also had lower BMD values compared with the controls, but these differences were not statistically significant.

No correlation was observed between BMD and the duration of diabetes, metabolic control, or markers of bone formation.

"Although bone density testing is not routinely performed in young women, these data suggest that screening may be important in young women with type 1 diabetes," Mastrandrea and colleagues advise. These patients should be counseled about lifestyle modification that may improve their bone health, such as getting enough exercise, calcium and vitamin D.

SOURCE: *Diabetes Care*, September 2008.

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