
Bone mass in the rheumatic diseases

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This work represents the second in the series of annual special issues dedicated to the latest developments in therapy for the rheumatic diseases to be published by *Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology*. Last year saw the publication of a supplement dedicated to "Combination disease-modifying antirheumatic drug therapy in rheumatoid arthritis". This year's issue focuses on another highly important topic in rheumatology: Bone mass and the rheumatic diseases.

Bone has been recognized to be negatively affected by the disease process and often by the therapy itself in many rheumatic diseases; bone loss leading to osteoporosis and fractures has been clearly documented in many conditions. This supplement will provide a comprehensive overview of the state of the art regarding this complex condition. Two reasons led us to choose this particular subject at this particular moment. First, although osteoporosis and related fractures occur very frequently among rheumatic patients and dramatically worsen

their quality of life, the seriousness of this problem is still underestimated and not sufficiently appreciated by most physicians. Second, recent advances in the pathophysiology and treatment of bone loss in rheumatic patients have finally provided not just theories to be debated, but also solid facts and effective preventive measures. Many of the researchers who have played a leading role in this field in recent years have contributed a chapter to this supplement. We are indebted to them all for their excellent reviews.

We also wish to thank the pharmaceutical companies Abiogen Pharma, Aventis Pharmaceuticals, Eli Lilly Italia, Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals, and Società Prodotti Antibiotici which unconditionally and generously supported the production of this issue. Finally we thank Luisa Marconcini and Lisa Chien of the editorial staff at *Clinical and Experimental Rheumatology* for their invaluable support in the realization of this project.

The Guest Editors

This supplement issue was made possible with the generous financial support of

Abiogen Pharma S.r.l.

Aventis Pharmaceuticals

Eli Lilly Italia S.p.A.

Procter & Gamble Pharmaceuticals S.p.A.

Società Prodotti Antibiotici S.p.A.
