Secondary Fracture Rate After Vertebral Osteoporotic Compression Fracture Is Decreased by Anti-Osteoporotic Medication but Not Increased by Cement Augmentation

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Background: Painful vertebral osteoporotic compression fractures (OCFs) are often treated with cement augmentation, although controversies exist as to whether or not this increases the secondary fracture risk. Prevention of secondary fracture includes treatment of underlying osteoporosis. The purposes of this study were to determine (1) whether cement augmentation increases the rate of secondary fracture compared with nonoperative management, (2) whether anti-osteoporotic medications reduce the rate of secondary fracture, and (3) the rate of osteoporosis treatment with medications following vertebral OCF.

Methods: The PearlDiver database was queried for all patients with a diagnosis of OCF from 2015 to 2019. Patients were excluded if they were <50 years old, had a diagnosis of spinal neoplasm or infection, or underwent lumbar fusion in the perioperative period. Secondary fracture risk was assessed using univariate and multivariate logistic regression analysis, with kyphoplasty, vertebroplasty, anti-osteoporotic medications, age, gender, and Elixhauser Comorbidity Index as variables.

Results: A total of 36,145 patients were diagnosed with an OCF during the study period. Of those, 25,904 (71.7%) underwent nonoperative management and 10,241 (28.3%) underwent cement augmentation, including 1,556 who underwent vertebroplasty and 8,833 who underwent kyphoplasty. Patients who underwent nonoperative management had a secondary fracture rate of 21.8% following the initial OCF, compared with 14.5% in the vertebroplasty cohort and 18.5% in the kyphoplasty cohort, which was not a significant difference on multivariate analysis. In the entire cohort, 2,833 (7.8%) received anti-osteoporotic medications and 33,312 (92.2%) did not. The rate of secondary fracture was 10.1% in patients who received medications and 21.9% in those who did not, which was a significant difference on multivariate analysis (odds ratio = 1.23, p < 0.001).

Conclusions: Cement augmentation did not alter the rate of secondary fracture, whereas anti-osteoporotic medications significantly decreased the risk of subsequent OCF by 19%. Only 7.8% of patients received a prescription for an anti-osteoporotic medication following the initial OCF.

Level of Evidence: Therapeutic Level III. See Instructions for Authors for a complete description of levels of evidence.

ertebral osteoporotic compression fractures (OCFs) represent a large burden on the U.S. health-care system. They comprise 27% of all osteoporotic fractures and are the most common osteoporotic fracture among the aging population¹. In 2015, Medicare spent \$658 million on vertebral OCFs, which had an incidence of 102.1 per 10,000 Medicare beneficiaries and a 1-year mortality rate of 21%². The risk of secondary fracture within 12 months of the index event was 15% among these patients². Barton et al. found that 38% of patients with vertebral fracture had secondary fracture within 2 years³. Research toward the prevention of OCFs is therefore critical to decrease the strain on the health-care system and patients.

Cement augmentation is a surgical treatment option for vertebral OCF⁴. However, a study by Trout et al. in 2006 showed that patients who underwent vertebroplasty had an increased rate of adjacent-segment fracture⁵. Since then, several randomized controlled trials have shown no difference in the rate of secondary fracture between patients who undergo cement

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augmentation and those who receive nonoperative management⁶⁻⁸. Meta-analyses of these studies have continued to show no difference in the subsequent fracture rate⁹⁻¹¹. Nonetheless, controversy still exists as to whether or not cement augmentation increases the secondary fracture risk.

Anti-osteoporotic medications are generally recommended as treatment for OCFs. Guidelines by a number of organizations all recommend secondary fracture prevention including medications for patients with osteoporosis-related spinal fractures¹²⁻¹⁴. Unfortunately, this rarely occurs. Barton et al. reported that 7% of patients were evaluated and treated for osteoporosis after a vertebral OCF³. Both antiresorptive and anabolic anti-osteoporotic medications have been shown in multiple randomized controlled trials to reduce the risk of primary and secondary spinal fractures by 40% to $60\%^{15-18}$. In addition, these medications have been shown to decrease the rate of repeat cement augmentation by up to $83\%^{19-21}$.

The purposes of this study were therefore to determine (1) whether cement augmentation increases the rate of secondary fracture following a vertebral OCF compared with nonoperative management, (2) whether anti-osteoporotic medications reduce the rate of secondary fracture, and (3) the rate of osteoporosis treatment with medications following a vertebral OCF.

Materials and Methods

The PearlDiver Mariner database is a national database that is commercially available. It contains records on 90 million orthopaedic patients collected from commercial and Medicare insurance claims from 2015 through 2019 in the United States. Both Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) and International Classification of Diseases (ICD) codes can be used to query the database for specific procedures and diagnoses. The database contains de-identified data. Therefore, institutional review board approval was not required to conduct this investigation.

All patients with a diagnosis of a vertebral OCF from 2015 to 2019 were included (Fig. 1). Patients were excluded if they were <50 years old or had a diagnosis of spinal neoplasm or spinal infection in the month prior to diagnosis of the OCF. Additionally, patients who underwent lumbar fusion on the same day or within 3 months following cement augmentation were excluded. Patients were categorized as receiving or not receiving anti-osteoporotic medications within 12 months after the index fracture. Patients were only included in the medication cohort if they received a prescription for the first time following diagnosis of the OCF. Anti-osteoporotic medications including bisphosphonates (both oral and intravenous [IV]), calcitonin, raloxifene, denosumab, and teriparatide were queried using the National Drug Code (NDC). Patients who were prescribed >1 medication were only counted once in the analysis. Patients were divided into those who underwent cement augmentation, defined as either vertebroplasty or kyphoplasty, within 3 months following the initial OCF and those who underwent nonoperative treatment. Patients who underwent >1 vertebroplasty or kyphoplasty were only counted once in the analysis. We then determined the rate of secondary

fracture in the year following the initial OCF. Secondary fracture was defined as a new diagnosis of OCF following the initial OCF using only initial encounter ICD-10 codes, as opposed to subsequent encounter and sequela codes. All ICD-10, CPT, and NDC codes utilized can be found in the Appendix.

Statistical analysis was performed using R (version 4.1.0; R Foundation for Statistical Computing). Demographic variables were compared using 2-tailed Student t tests (for continuous variables) or Pearson chi-square tests (for categorical variables). The secondary fracture rate was compared between groups using univariate and multivariate logistic regression analyses. Variables in the multivariate analysis were age, gender, Elixhauser Comorbidity Index (ECI), and whether or not a patient received anti-osteoporotic medications, kyphoplasty, or vertebroplasty. The ECI is a widely used comorbidity index that assesses patients based on 30 different comorbidities²². Additionally, the incidence of secondary fracture was assessed separately for antiresorptive and anabolic medications. Variables in these analyses included age, gender, and ECI. All patients who underwent cement augmentation were then grouped, and the secondary fracture risk was assessed with age, gender, ECI, and whether or not a patient received anti-osteoporotic medications as variables. Odds ratios (ORs) with 97.5% confidence intervals (CIs) are reported. A p value of <0.05 was considered significant.

Source of Funding

No funding was received to conduct this study.

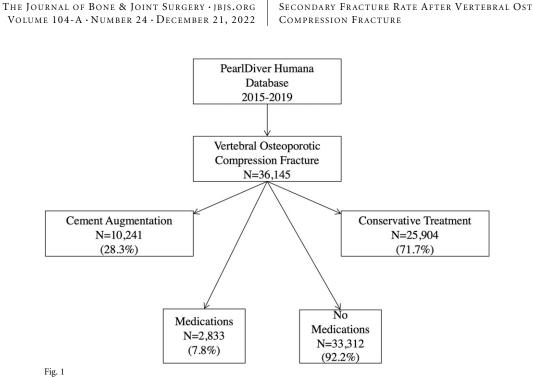
Results

Demographics

total of 36,145 patients were diagnosed with a vertebral A total of 36,145 patients were tangated. OCF during the study period. The largest group of patients were between 75 and 79 years of age, and 79.7% were female (Table I). In the entire cohort, 25,904 (71.7%) of the patients underwent nonoperative management and 10,241 (28.3%) underwent cement augmentation, including 1,556 who underwent vertebroplasty and 8,833 who underwent kyphoplasty (Fig. 1). The latter 2 numbers total more than the total number of patients who underwent cement augmentation, which is likely due to patients who developed a secondary fracture and underwent secondary cement augmentation. The rate of cement augmentation increased over the course of the study period, starting at 25.8% in 2015 and increasing to 28.0% in 2019 (Fig. 2). In the entire cohort, 2,833 (7.8%) of the patients received anti-osteoporotic medications and 33,312 (92.2%) did not. This rate stayed relatively constant over the course of the study period, starting at 8.6% in 2015, dropping to 7.1% in 2018, and ending at 7.7% in 2019 (Fig. 2).

Comparison of Secondary Fracture Risk

Patients who underwent nonoperative management were more likely to be male (p < 0.001) and had a higher average ECI (p < 0.001). Age and whether or not a patient was prescribed antiosteoporotic medications were not significantly different between the 2 groups (Table I). Of those who underwent



Study design.

nonoperative treatment, 5,636 (21.8%) developed a secondary fracture following the initial OCF, compared with 225 (14.5%) in the vertebroplasty cohort and 1,635 (18.5%) in the kypho-

plasty cohort. On univariate analysis, vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty did not affect the secondary fracture risk (OR = 0.92[CI = 0.82 to 1.03], p = 0.153, for vertebroplasty; OR = 1.05

Demographic	Entire Cohort (N = 36,145)	No CA (N = 25,904)	CA (N = 10,241)	P Value
Age in yr (no.)				0.5103
50 to 54	741	543	198	
55 to 59	1,541	1,104	437	
60 to 64	2,664	1,933	731	
65 to 69	3,677	2,605	1,072	
70 to 74	5,086	3,607	1,479	
75 to 79	16,208	11,620	4,588	
80 to 84	6,228	4,492	1,736	
Sex (no. [%])				<0.001†
Female	28,795 (79.7)	20,912 (80.7)	7,883 (77.0)	
Male	7,350 (20.3)	4,992 (19.3)	2,358 (23.0)	
Year (no.)				0.0028†
2015	2,925	2,171	754	
2016	9,493	6,842	2,651	
2017	8,525	6,055	2,470	
2018	8,206	5,800	2,406	
2019	6,996	5,036	1,960	
Medications (no. [%])				0.2784
Yes	2,833 (7.8)	2,029 (7.8)	804 (7.9)	
No	33,312 (92.2)	23,875 (92.2)	9,437 (92.1)	
Mean ECI \pm SD	6.62 ± 3.94	6.67 ±3.97	6.51 ±3.85	<0.001†

SECONDARY FRACTURE RATE AFTER VERTEBRAL OSTEOPOROTIC

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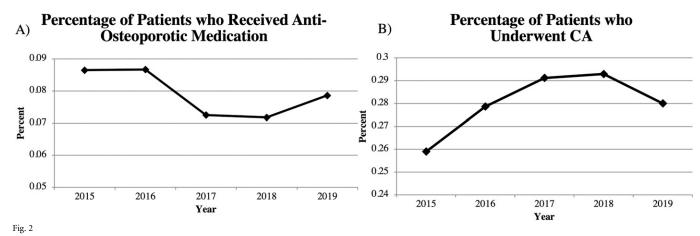


Fig. 2-A Percentage of patients who received a prescription for anti-osteoporotic medications from 2015 to 2019. Fig. 2-B Percentage of patients who underwent cement augmentation (CA) from 2015 to 2019.

[CI = 1.00 to 1.11], p = 0.068, for kyphoplasty). Anti-osteoporotic medications were found to significantly decrease the secondary fracture risk. The secondary fracture rate was 10.1% in patients who received such medications compared with 21.9% in those who did not receive medications (OR = 1.23 [CI = 1.17 to 1.30], p < 0.001). Patients who were younger, were female, and had a higher ECI were also found to have an increased risk of secondary fracture on univariate analysis (Table II).

In the multivariate analysis, vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty continued not to affect secondary fracture risk (OR = 0.92 [CI = 0.82 to 1.03], p = 0.152, for vertebroplasty; OR = 1.06 [CI 1.00 to 1.12], p = 0.060, for kyphoplasty). Patients who did not receive a prescription for anti-osteoporotic medication continued to have an increased risk of secondary fracture (OR = 1.23 [CI = 1.17 to 1.29], p < 0.001). A significantly elevated risk of secondary fracture also persisted in patients who were younger and those with a higher ECI. However, female gender was no longer associated with an increased secondary fracture risk (Table II).

Subanalysis of Antiresorptive Medications

A total of 2,414 patients (6.7%) received antiresorptive medications, including oral bisphosphonates (n = 1,298), IV bis-

phosphonates (n = 20), denosumab (n = 378), raloxifene (n =18), and calcitonin (n = 827). Multiple patients were prescribed >1 antiresorptive medication. Patients who received antiresorptive medications had a secondary fracture rate of 10.3%. On univariate analysis, patients who did not receive antiresorptive medications had a significantly increased risk of secondary fracture compared with those who did receive antiresorptive medications (OR = 1.17 [CI = 1.11 to 1.24], p < 0.001). In this analysis, patients who were younger, were female, and had a higher ECI had an increased risk of secondary fracture (Table III).

On multivariate analysis, no prescription for antiresorptive medications remained a significant predictor of increased secondary fracture risk (OR = 1.17 [CI = 1.11 to 1.23], p < 0.001). Again, younger age and a higher ECI were associated with increased secondary fracture risk. However, gender no longer significantly affected the secondary fracture risk on multivariate analysis (Table III).

Subanalysis of Anabolic Medications

Four hundred and nineteen (1.2%) of the patients received a prescription for teriparatide following the initial vertebral OCF.

		Ur	nivariate		Multivariate					
			CI							
	OR	2.50%	97.50%	P Value	OR	2.50%	97.50%	P Value		
Age, per year	1.00	0.99	1.00	0.015†	1.00	0.99	1.00	0.006†		
Male gender	0.93	0.87	0.99	0.018	0.96	0.90	1.03	0.265		
ECI	1.01	1.00	1.02	<0.001†	1.01	1.00	1.02	0.001†		
No medications	1.23	1.17	1.30	<0.001†	1.23	1.17	1.29	<0.001†		
Vertebroplasty	0.92	0.82	1.03	0.153	0.92	0.82	1.03	0.152		
Kyphoplasty	1.05	1.00	1.11	0.068	1.06	1.00	1.12	0.060		

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TABLE III Univariate and Multivariate Analysis of Secondary Fracture Rate in Patients Who Received Antiresorptive Medications Compared with Those Who Did Not Receive Anti-Osteoporotic Medications*

		Ur	nivariate		Multivariate				
		CI				CI			
	OR	2.50%	97.50%	P Value	OR	2.50%	97.50%	P Value	
Age, per year	1.00	0.99	1.00	0.015†	0.99	0.99	1.00	0.004†	
Male gender	0.93	0.87	0.99	0.0178†	0.95	0.89	1.01	0.126	
ECI	1.01	1.00	1.02	<0.001†	1.01	1.00	1.02	<0.001†	
No anti-osteoporotic medications	1.17	1.11	1.24	<0.001†	1.17	1.11	1.23	<0.001†	

*OR = odds ratio, CI = confidence interval, and ECI = Elixhauser Comorbidity Index. +Significant.

Of these, 37 (8.8%) were diagnosed with a secondary fracture. On univariate analysis, patients who were not prescribed antiosteoporotic medications had a significantly increased risk of secondary fracture compared with those who received a prescription for anabolic medications (OR = 1.32 [CI = 1.05 to 1.65], p = 0.015). Younger age, female gender, and a higher ECI were associated with increased risk of secondary fracture (Table IV).

On multivariate analysis, no prescription for anabolic medications continued to show an association with increased secondary fracture risk (OR = 1.30 [CI = 1.03 to 1.62], p = 0.023). Significance also persisted for the other variables; younger age, female gender, and a higher ECI were associated with increased risk of secondary fracture (Table IV).

Subanalysis of Patients Who Underwent Cement Augmentation

Of the patients who underwent cement augmentation, those who received anti-osteoporotic medications had a secondary fracture rate of 4.9%, compared with 17.6% in those who did not receive medications, which was a significant difference on univariate analysis (OR = 1.32 [CI = 1.19 to 1.46], p < 0.001). Female gender was found to be associated with an increased risk of secondary fracture (p = 0.004). Age and ECI were not found to affect the secondary fracture rate in this analysis (Table V).

On multivariate analysis, the difference in secondary fracture rate between those who received medications and those who did not remained significant (OR = 1.28 [CI = 1.16 to 1.43], p < 0.001). Age, gender, and ECI did not demonstrate an effect on the secondary fracture rate on multivariate analysis in those who underwent cement augmentation (Table V).

Discussion

The current findings support that cement augmentation does not alter rates of subsequent vertebral OCF but antiosteoporotic medications are protective against secondary fracture. Patients who underwent vertebroplasty and kyphoplasty had a secondary fracture rate of 14.5% and 18.5%, respectively, which was not significantly different from the rate of 21.8% in the nonoperative treatment cohort. Patients who received anti-osteoporotic medications had a secondary fracture rate of 10.1% compared with 21.9% in those who did not receive medications, and they were 19% less likely to have a subsequent OCF on multivariate analysis. Additionally, in our subanalysis of patients who underwent cement augmentation, patients who received anti-osteoporotic medications were 22% less likely to have a secondary fracture than those who did not receive medications. Additionally, we found that younger age and increased ECI were associated with increased secondary fracture risk, at a rate of

 TABLE IV Univariate and Multivariate Analysis of Secondary Fracture Rate in Patients Who Received Anabolic Medications Compared with Those Who Did Not Receive Anti-Osteoporotic Medications

		UI	nivariate		Multivariate				
		CI				CI			
	OR	2.50%	97.50%	P Value	OR	2.50%	97.50%	P Value	
Age, per year	1.00	0.99	1.00	0.015†	1.00	0.99	1.00	0.011†	
Male gender	0.93	0.87	0.99	0.0178†	0.92	0.86	0.98	0.010†	
ECI	1.01	1.00	1.02	<0.001†	1.01	1.00	1.02	0.001†	
No anti-osteoporotic medications	1.32	1.05	1.65	0.015†	1.30	1.03	1.62	0.023†	

SECONDARY FRACTURE RATE AFTER VERTEBRAL OSTEOPOROTIC COMPRESSION FRACTURE

TABLE V Univariate and Multivariate Analysis of Secondary Fracture Rate in Patients Who Underwent Cement Augmentation*

		Univariate				Multivariate				
	OR	CI				CI				
		2.50%	97.50%	P Value	OR	2.50%	97.50%	P Value		
Age	1.01	1.00	1.01	0.066	1.01	1.00	1.01	0.085		
Male gender	0.83	0.73	0.94	0.004†	0.88	0.78	1.00	0.057		
ECI	1.01	1.00	1.03	0.080	1.01	1.00	1.03	0.074		
No anti-osteoporotic medications	1.32	1.19	1.46	<0.001†	1.28	1.16	1.43	<0.001†		

*OR = odds ratio, CI = confidence interval, and ECI = Elixhauser Comorbidity Index. †Significant.

0.5% per year and 1% per unit, respectively. Finally, we found a low rate of osteoporosis treatment, with only 7.8% of patients prescribed anti-osteoporotic medications after a vertebral OCF.

Whether or not cement augmentation alters the rate of secondary fracture has been controversial. Trout et al. reported on 432 patients who underwent vertebroplasty and found that 86 patients (19.9%) had a subsequent fracture. Of those fractures, 41.4% occurred in a vertebra adjacent to the prior vertebroplasty. They concluded that vertebroplasty is associated with adjacent-segment fracture and suggested that this may be because the biomechanical effect of the procedure increases the risk of subsequent fracture⁵. However, the cohort was limited to patients who underwent vertebroplasty, and no control group was included for comparison. Because of this, the findings by Trout et al. should not be interpreted as supporting an increased risk of secondary fracture in patients who undergo vertebroplasty compared with nonoperative management.

Other studies have subsequently evaluated the effect of cement augmentation on secondary fracture rates. In 2009, Buchbinder et al. reported that vertebroplasty to treat painful OCFs did not show a benefit compared with sham surgery with respect to improvement in pain⁶. The secondary fracture rate was also assessed at 6 months as a secondary outcome, and no difference between groups was found. In 2010, a randomized controlled trial of 202 patients by Klazen et al. showed no difference in secondary fracture rate between vertebroplasty and nonoperative treatment⁷. A separate randomized controlled trial of 92 patients by Staples et al. likewise showed no difference in secondary fracture rate between vertebroplasty and placebo treatment at 12 and 24 months⁸.

Several meta-analyses have been published, and these likewise showed no difference in secondary fracture rate⁹⁻¹¹. The largest of these was by Zhang et al., who performed a metaanalysis of 12 randomized controlled trials, clinical controlled trials, and prospective studies⁹. They pooled 1,328 patients; 768 underwent cement augmentation and 560 underwent nonoperative management. No difference in secondary fracture rate between the 2 groups was found. A meta-analysis by Anderson et al. of 5 randomized controlled trials again did not find a difference in secondary fracture risk between vertebroplasty and nonoperative treatment²³. Despite the increasing evidence that cement augmentation does not increase secondary fracture risk, a recent guideline by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE)¹² does not recommend cement augmentation because of the potential increased risk of adjacentsegment fracture that Trout et al. reported⁵. To our knowledge, our cohort of 36,145 patients is the largest study to date on this topic. No difference in secondary fracture rate was found between those who underwent cement augmentation and those who underwent nonoperative management. Our findings confirm the results from the abovementioned randomized controlled trials and metaanalyses that cement augmentation does not alter the rate of secondary fracture.

Our study also supports the abundance of literature indicating that anti-osteoporotic medications are effective at preventing secondary fracture²⁴⁻²⁸. In a national database study of 79,225 patients in Taiwan, Liang et al. found that patients taking calcium and vitamin D, bisphosphonates, or calcitonin were less likely to undergo a repeat cement augmentation, by 66%, 53%, and 78%, respectively²⁰. A similar study of the same database by Kao et al. found that patients who received IV antiosteoporotic medications were 18% less likely to undergo repeat cement augmentation than those who received oral medications¹⁹. In the present study, patients were 19% less likely to have a subsequent fracture if they received these medications. Furthermore, when focusing on patients who underwent cement augmentation, we found that those who received anti-osteoporotic medications were 22% less likely to have a secondary fracture.

Additionally, in the subanalyses of the individual medication classes, patients who received antiresorptive medications were 15% less likely to be diagnosed with a secondary vertebral OCF, and patients who received anabolic medications were 23% less likely, compared with those who were not medically treated for osteoporosis. Anabolic medications have previously been compared with antiresorptive medications in the literature. Kendler et al. performed a randomized controlled trial comparing teriparatide to risedronate in postmenopausal women with severe osteoporosis²⁵. They found that teriparatide decreased the risk of new vertebral OCFs to a greater extent than risedronate did. It is now the recommendation of the Endocrine Society that THE JOURNAL OF BONE & JOINT SURGERY · JBJS.ORG VOLUME 104-A · NUMBER 24 · DECEMBER 21, 2022 SECONDARY FRACTURE RATE AFTER VERTEBRAL OSTEOPOROTIC COMPRESSION FRACTURE

women with severe osteoporosis, particularly those with severe or multiple vertebral OCFs, be treated with teriparatide²⁹. Our results further support that anabolic medications decrease the secondary fracture risk, relative to patients who do not receive medical treatment for osteoporosis following vertebral OCFs, to a greater degree than antiresorptive medications do.

Recently, the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR) proposed guidelines for routine medical treatment following hip and spinal fractures in postmenopausal women, in which they recommend that all patients ≥ 65 years old with a vertebral fracture be offered anti-osteoporotic medications¹³. Unfortunately, only 7.8% of the patients in the present study were prescribed anti-osteoporotic medications, which aligns with previous reports of osteoporosis treatment rates following fragility fractures². Barton et al. found a 7% rate of treatment with antiresorptive medications following a vertebral OCF in their retrospective review of 2,933 patients³. A recent international study found that only 20% of patients diagnosed with a fragility fracture, including those of the hip, wrist, humerus, or a vertebra, were correctly treated for osteoporosis³⁰. Smith et al. recently reported that 92.3% of patients with pelvic fragility fractures were never prescribed anti-osteoporotic medications, and 41% went on to experience another fracture within 2 years³¹. The poor rates of secondary fracture prevention have led to calls for action, including the "Own the Bone" program of the American Orthopaedic Association and the current recommendations from the ASBMR^{13,32}. Considering the burden that fragility fractures place on health-care systems and on patients, it is imperative that we improve our treatment of osteoporosis in patients with known osteoporotic fractures.

There are several limitations to this study. Large database studies are limited by reliance on accurate medical coding and are retrospective in nature. Furthermore, the AACE recently recommended that clinicians consider starting patients with very high fracture risk on IV antiresorptive medications¹². We were unable to determine if patients who were prescribed IV bisphosphonates had a decreased secondary fracture rate compared with those who were prescribed oral bisphosphonates be-

cause that analysis lacked sufficient power. However, this is an important area of further research. Lastly, we were unable to account for anti-osteoporotic medication dosing, duration, and patient compliance.

In conclusion, cement augmentation did not alter the rate of secondary fracture following vertebral OCF. However, anti-osteoporotic medications decreased the risk of secondary fracture by 19%. Unfortunately, there was a low rate of osteoporosis treatment, with only 7.8% of patients prescribed antiosteoporotic medications. Despite recent efforts to promote evidence-based treatment of osteoporosis, we found that the rate of medical treatment continues to be unacceptably low. Physicians should be aware of this large gap in osteoporosis management, and pathways to increase the initiation of antiosteoporotic medication following vertebral OCFs should be created and implemented.

Appendix

(eA) Supporting material provided by the authors is posted with the online version of this article as a data supplement at jbjs.org (http://links.lww.com/JBJS/H268).

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