



Effects of steroids on bone mineral content in women with bronchial asthma

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The effects of corticosteroids on bone mass in patients with bronchial asthma (BA) are still controversial. To elucidate whether steroid administration may influence bone mineral content (BMC) and bone mineral density (BMD) in women with BA, a longitudinal study was designed for adult female asthmatics receiving long-term steroid therapy. We measured whole body BMC and lumbar BMD by dual energy X-ray absorptiometry in 23 women with BA and compared the results with those from 17 age-matched controls. Both patient and control groups were followed up for at least 1 year (mean (\pm SD) observation period 94 ± 33 weeks). We divided the asthmatic patients into two groups on the basis of the mode of steroid administration: (i) group A consisted of 10 patients with low dose oral steroid administration (prednisolone 5-10 mg daily); and (ii) group B consisted of 13 patients with low dose beclomethasone dipropionate (BDP) inhalation therapy (BDP 400-800 mg daily). There were no significant differences in both baseline values and changes of BMC and BMD among the three groups. These results demonstrate that asthmatic patients show normal bone mass and that both low dose steroid administration and BDP inhalation do not significantly affect BMC in patients with BA over the period studied. We suggest that appropriate steroid use does not augment bone mineral loss in asthmatics.

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