

## POSTER ABSTRACTS

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### Special Populations 17

#### **An Assessment of Female Adolescent and Young Women's Knowledge, Beliefs and Behaviors Toward Osteoporosis**

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**Background:** The majority of osteoporosis research has concentrated on postmenopausal women with little focus on prevention research for young women and children. Osteoporosis needs to be investigated as a pediatric problem. We investigated adolescent and young women's level of knowledge and sources of information about osteoporosis, their self-efficacy, and to what extent they practice preventive behaviors.

**Methods:** A self administered, mailed survey went out to female adolescents (13-17)  $n=167$  and young women (18-25)  $n=167$ , who were dependents of members or were themselves members of HealthPartners. The survey instrument was a 50 item mail-out-mail-back form with telephone follow-up. The primary outcomes of interest were osteoporosis knowledge, osteoporosis self-efficacy (confidence to carry out certain behaviors), osteo-protective behavior, risk factors (smoking and alcohol use) and information sources for osteoporosis.

**Results:** All results reported are statistically significant at  $P>.05$ . There was a positive association between Osteoporosis Knowledge (OKT) and information from magazines, parent's education, and receiving information from school or teachers. However, receiving information regarding osteoporosis from doctors/clinics was inversely related to one's knowledge. Young women scored higher on OKT compared to adolescents. Young women consumed less calcium and got less exercise than adolescents. Young women were more likely to have smoked or drank alcohol within the past month. There was a positive association between Osteoporosis Self-Efficacy (OSE) and information from magazines and parent education. A positive relationship was found between OSE and calcium intake, and OSE and exercise.

**Conclusions:** Interestingly knowledge of osteoporosis does not lead to osteo-protective behavior. Adolescents, who scored lower on OKT, are practicing more osteo-protective behaviors than young women. It appears that self-efficacy is a stronger predictor than knowledge for osteo-protective behavior. The most effective information source for this population is magazines. Future research should focus on osteoporosis self-efficacy and behavior change specifically investigating the developmental and social changes between adolescents and young adulthood which lead to less osteo-protective behavior.