

THE WINDSOR STAR

Screening process for osteoporosis a boost in bone care, doctor says

Windsor Regional Hospital's fracture clinic will now screen patients for osteoporosis in hopes of preventing future bone fractures

Author of the article:

Tamar Harris

Publishing date:

May 31, 2017



Dr. Sam Ladeia, left, the new fracture prevention co-ordinator at Windsor Regional Hospital, and Dr. Tom Trajkovski, orthopedic surgeon, on May 31, 2017, discuss a partnership with Osteoporosis Canada to better screen patients for osteoporosis. PHOTO BY JASON KRYK /Windsor Star

Windsor Regional Hospital is taking steps to prevent repeat bone fractures by screening fracture clinic patients for osteoporosis.

Previously, fracture patients were assessed for osteoporosis risk factors at the hospital's Ouellette Campus and referred to their family doctor for followup care. Now, in partnership with Osteoporosis Canada, the hospital will screen and, if needed, treat fracture clinic patients for the bone-weakening disease.

Fractures due to osteoporosis are more common than breast cancer, heart attacks and strokes combined, the hospital said.

“Now what happens, is if someone presents to our hospital with any sort of fracture that is considered medium to high risk – including wrist fractures, spine fractures, rib fractures, hip fractures – every single patient is screened and will be treated accordingly,” said Dr. Tom Trajkovski, an orthopedic surgeon at Windsor Regional Hospital.

The majority of patients — 80 per cent — with a fracture are not assessed for underlying osteoporosis. This means hundreds of thousands of Canadians suffer fractures each year, while the underlying osteoporosis goes undiagnosed and untreated.

Trajkovski said “a significant proportion of patients, into the probably thousands” fell through the cracks without this program.

Sam Ladeia, the new fracture prevention co-ordinator, has screened 90 patients since Feb. 20. Of those, 20 were assessed as high risk.

Osteoporosis Canada says that fewer than 20 per cent of fracture patients in Canada have their underlying osteoporosis diagnosed or properly treated — something Dr. Aliya Khan, a clinical professor of medicine at McMaster University, calls a “sad reality.”



Dr. Aliya Khan, clinical professor of medicine, endocrinology, metabolism and geriatrics at McMaster University, speaks May 31, 2017, during a news conference at the Windsor Regional Hospital Fracture Clinic on Ouellette Avenue about how best to prevent fractures. PHOTO BY JASON KRYK /Windsor Star

“By having a fracture liaison service, which this hospital has taken the initiative to implement, we will be able to identify people who have fractures due to their osteoporosis ... and we will be able to start effective therapy,” Khan said.

She said the treatment rate for the underlying osteoporosis should double with the new program, going from 20 to 46 per cent.

Trajkovski said he doesn't want patients coming through the clinic multiple times if their injuries can be prevented.

“The easy part is the diagnosis,” he said. “We want to make sure that the patients are being treated, that they have follow-up, and most importantly, we're preventing the new fractures from developing.

“Which is not only important for the patients, it's also important to the hospital and the healthcare system because these fractures are very expensive for our hospital and our community.”

Trajkovski said that with the new program, zero patients should fall through the gaps.

The program's goal is to make the patient's first fracture their last. Many of those fractures are caused by falls.

“You can slip on ice, you can lose your balance at any time,” Ladeia said. “You can't really prevent a future fall. But we can prevent future fractures.”