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### LOW-DOSE ESTROGEN THERAPY MORE EFFECTIVE IN TREATING OSTEOPOROSIS IN WOMEN WITH LOWER ESTROGEN LEVELS PRIOR TO TREATMENT

**Montréal (25 June 2007)**—Treatment with very low-dose estrogen has been shown to be more effective in suppressing bone turnover in postmenopausal women with lower rather than higher natural levels of estrogen in their blood. This discovery suggests that measurement of women's natural estrogen levels may be useful in predicting whether very low-dose estrogen will protect women against osteoporosis. Alison Huang, MD, reported these findings today at the 17<sup>th</sup> Scientific Meeting of the International Bone & Mineral Society (IBMS).

The Women's Health Initiative study in 2002 determined that long-term use of postmenopausal estrogen can increase a woman's risk of cardiovascular diseases. As a result, there has been growing interest in using the lowest possible dose of estrogen in postmenopausal women to lessen the risks of these diseases while protecting against other postmenopausal health problems, such as osteoporosis.

Dr. Huang and her colleagues analyzed data from the Ultra Low-dose Transdermal Estrogen Assessment (ULTRA) study, a randomized clinical trial that assessed the effects of a very low dose (14 ug/day) estrogen patch in 417 postmenopausal women. At the start of the trial, women were measured for serum estradiol and estrone, the two most common forms of naturally occurring estrogen in older women. Measurements of several markers that indicate bone turnover also were recorded before and after therapy.

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Results indicated that women who had very low levels of estrogen in their blood at the start of the trial had significantly lower bone turnover after using the very low-dose estrogen patch for one year. The same dose of estrogen was found to have minimal effects on bone turnover in women with higher levels of estrogen at the start of the trial.

“This is the first study to suggest that the effects of a very low dose of estrogen may vary substantially from woman to woman based on their natural estrogen levels,” says Dr. Huang. “Measuring a woman’s natural estrogen levels prior to estrogen therapy may help doctors determine how effective her treatment will be.”

For more information about Dr. Huang’s study, please visit [www.ibmsonline.org](http://www.ibmsonline.org).

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The International Bone & Mineral Society (IBMS) is the first and the largest international network of researchers, clinicians, companies and societies dedicated to promoting the generation and dissemination of knowledge of basic biology and clinical science of the skeleton and mineral metabolism. To learn more about IBMS, visit [www.ibmsonline.org](http://www.ibmsonline.org).