



SECOND JOINT MEETING OF THE

European Calcified Tissue Society AND THE International Bone and Mineral Society

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL 14.30 (CEST) ON 27 JUNE

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25-29 June: ECTS-IBMS Media Room, Secretariat 1
Palexpo Congress Centre, Geneva, Switzerland

DEPO-PROVERA LOWERS BONE DENSITY IN YOUNG WOMEN

Geneva, Switzerland (27 June 2005)—Depo-Provera, the injectable contraceptive used by more than 9 million women worldwide, may have a negative effect on bone growth in young women before their skeletal maturity, according to findings of a study presented at the [Second Joint Meeting of the European Calcified Tissue Society and the International Bone and Mineral Society](#) by Jennifer Walsh, M.R.C.P. Depo-Provera suppresses estrogen levels and induces amenorrhea (discontinuation of menstruation). This has raised concerns about skeletal effects as reported in the findings.

While other studies have examined the outcomes of injectable contraceptives on the skeleton, Dr. Walsh and her team sought to determine whether the effects of Depo-Provera on the skeleton were age-specific. Young women who use Depo-Provera are more likely to be smokers, pregnant at a young age, and uneducated beyond high school than their peers, all of which could have an effect on bone density. Therefore, the research team sought to eliminate the effect of social and lifestyle factors by the use of individually matched controls.

They recruited 100 pairs of women ages 18-25 (before skeletal maturity) and 35-45 (after skeletal maturity) from Sheffield, U.K., and matched them for source of recruitment, postcode, age, height, body mass index and smoking habits. Users of oral contraceptives were included in the control groups as oral contraceptives do not influence bone mineral density. For all study participants, bone mineral density was assessed by dual x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) at the spine, hip and forearm.

While the older age group showed no difference between Depo-Provera users and the control group, the younger cohort had a 5 percent lower bone density at the spine and hip than its matched control groups, suggesting an increased risk of osteoporosis and fracture in later life.

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“Other studies have measured bone density in young women who have stopped using Depo-Provera,” says Dr. Walsh, “and there is good evidence that the deficit is partially reversible. Now, we are measuring bone biochemistry and hormones using samples from our study participants to identify how Depo-Provera affects bone,” she adds. “This will guide us in offering advice on how to prevent bone loss for young Depo-Provera users.”

For more information on Dr. Walsh’s study, please visit www.ects-ibms-2005.org.

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[The European Calcified Tissue Society \(ECTS\)](#) is the major organization in Europe for researchers and clinicians working in the field of calcified tissues. [The International Bone and Mineral Society \(IBMS\)](#) is the international society working to promote the generation and dissemination of knowledge about bone and mineral metabolism.

The [ECTS-IBMS Second Joint Meeting](#), held in Geneva, Switzerland, 25-29 June 2005, brings together some 3,000 researchers, clinicians, physicians and other allied health professionals, will offer participants the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of bone biology, bone diseases and their correlation to mineral metabolism.

State-of-the-art research on bone and mineralized tissue, along with diagnostic and therapeutic aspects of metabolic bone diseases will be presented through symposia, workshops, training courses, lectures, posters and Meet the Professor sessions. Topics covered at the meeting include: osteoporosis assessment, treatment, genetics and physiology; clinical disorders other than osteoporosis; stem cells and bone cells; nutrition and bone; metabolic bone disease; bone imaging and assessment; and bone development.

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