

# Inside Story HIGHLIGHTS

From the Pacific Radiology Referrer Newsletter



Pacific Radiology

## Osteoporosis Matters

### THE ROLE OF CALCIUM IN THE MANAGEMENT OF OSTEOPOROSIS



Mike Nowitz

An adequate intake of calcium is necessary throughout life to maintain bone health.

- > Recent evidence from the Auckland Calcium Study that a 1 gram calcium supplement in elderly women was associated with an increase in risk of myocardial infarction has caused doctors and patients to request advice regarding the use of calcium supplements. There is no international consensus around the subject at present.
- > It is likely that this is primarily a problem for elderly women because they are more likely than younger subjects to have coronary heart disease. Therefore, it seems wise to advise against calcium supplementation in those over the age of 70 years and in those known to have coronary heart disease.
- > There is very little data relating to the cardiovascular effects of calcium supplements in older men but similar cautions may be appropriate.

- > As far as possible calcium should be from dietary sources aiming at a total calcium intake of approximately 1 g/day (equivalent to four servings of dairy products). For instance, in a person consuming a dietary intake of ~0.5 g, calcium supplementation should not exceed 0.5 g.
- > Calcium is not recommended as an adequate monotherapy to treat osteoporosis or reduce fracture risk.
- > There is no reason on the basis of the Auckland Calcium Study to be advising reduced calcium intake in children, adolescents or young and middle-aged adults.

This information is derived from the current Osteoporosis New Zealand management guidelines. The full version can be accessed at the OPNZ website (<http://www.bones.org.nz/>).

~ **Mike Nowitz**