



Latino Women and Osteoporosis

Latino women are at significant risk for developing osteoporosis. Studies have shown that Latino women, along with Caucasian women, consume less calcium than the Recommended Dietary Allowance in all age groups. And, it is estimated that the number of hip fractures worldwide will increase sharply over the next half century, especially in Asia and Latin America. Another area of concern stems from the rapid aging of the population, since the elderly are at greatest risk for developing fractures. The Latino population is growing at a faster rate than the non-Latino: Between 1980 and 1990, it increased by 53%, in comparison with only 6.7% for non-Hispanics. The Bureau of the Census estimates that the Latino population is expected to almost triple between 1995 and 2050.

According to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III) (1988-91), between 36-49% of Mexican American women age 50 and older (300-400,000 women) have experienced significant loss of bone density. Among the Mexican American women identified in the NHANES study, 13-16% (100,000) already have osteoporosis. Although there are no statistics on the incidence of fracture among Latino women, the likelihood of osteoporotic fracture increases with age and loss of bone density.