

Frequent Bone Scans for Osteoporosis Revealed as yet another Medical Scam

By Ethan A. Huff

There seems to be a scan for almost every medical condition these days. But not all of these scans have been proven safe or effective, or even necessary for that matter. A new study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) has revealed that bone mineral density scans, which check for early signs of the bone disease osteoporosis, are often conducted too frequently on many people, and in many cases may not even be necessary.

According to *ABC News*, Dr. Margaret Gourlay from the University of North Carolina and her colleagues evaluated data from nearly 5,000 women aged 67 years and older, none of whom had osteoporosis at the outset of a national health study they participated in beginning in the 1980s. Using public funds for their research, Gourlay and her team determined that women who have a healthy initial screening do not need another screening for up to 15 years.

This finding contrasts with current recommendations on bone mineral density tests which, admittedly, are not scientific, but have simply been made up over time. So-called medical experts say they really do not know how often people should get these screenings, which makes one wonder if they know whether or not the screenings are even effective to begin with. And yet most women are urged to get a bone mineral density test every one or two years (http://www.medicinenet.com/bone_density_scan/page5.htm).

"It's an expenditure of time, it's exposure to radiation, and it's a cost," said Dr. Virginia Moyer, head of the US Preventive Services Task Force, a government panel responsible for establishing testing guidelines, concerning bone mineral density tests. "And there's no reason to expose yourself to any risks if there's going to be no benefit."

The health risks Dr. Moyer speaks of involve the use of radiation as part of the testing procedure. While the amount of radiation emitted from a dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) scan is said to be only a fraction of what is emitted during a chest x-ray, routine exposure to ionizing radiation is known to cause cancer and other health problems (http://www.naturalnews.com/ionizing_radiation.html).

Mammograms, medical x-rays, CT scans, and bone mineral density scans all emit ionizing radiation, and some of these procedures have questionable or unproven efficacy at providing any benefit. With medical authorities practically making up the rules as they go along, it seems, it is really anyone's guess whether or not such tests are worth the time, the expense, or the health risk.

