

Ostera, A Novel Approach to Osteoporosis

Sunday, March 22

As you might imagine, I'm constantly on the lookout for new ways to prevent and treat osteoporosis.

Frequently on "Health Talk" and in this blog (Serious Concerns Over Osteoporosis Drugs, Jan. 9, 2009), I've aired my reservations over prescribing standard osteoporosis medications.

I've pioneered aggressive use of such nutrients as vitamin D, strontium, vitamin K, ipriflavone and many others in an effort to sidestep reliance on potentially toxic drugs.

But, until now, an important element has been missing from the osteoporosis equation.

Many look at osteoporosis simply as a deficiency state, in which lack of absorption of critical nutrients results in impaired bone-building. While certainly part of the story, this explanation still falls short. Unhealthy bone responds only partially to vitamin supplementation.

Alternatively, some speculate that hormones are the crucial determinant of bone strength. While I'm a big advocate of bioidentical hormone replacement—including not just estrogen and progesterone, but also DHEA and testosterone—many patients need more than just hormones to combat bone loss.

True, there's exercise. But some patients fail to respond to even the most rigorous programs.

What is often not appreciated, by conventional and alternative

medicine alike, is that osteoporosis is actually an INFLAMMATORY DISEASE. As a prime example, patients with the severe inflammation of rheumatoid arthritis have dramatically accelerated bone loss. But all of us tend toward inflammation as we age, and this body-wide process does not exempt the bones.

The realization that inflammation is at the core of osteoporosis has prompted investigation into new drug therapies that specifically target bone inflammation. One such drug is denosumab, now in clinical trials.

Denosumab is a breakthrough bioengineered monoclonal antibody. This new Amgen drug has shown significant benefits in clinical trials and promises to be a blockbuster once it's approved within a couple of years. But it's certain to be VERY expensive, and it requires injections to work.

I predict these new drugs will arrive at an opportune time: just when the medical establishment and the public will be in full retreat from the current crop of medications, as their limitations and side effects become increasingly evident.

In response to the need for more targeted nutraceutical approaches to osteoporosis, Jeffrey Bland, Ph.D. and researchers at MetaProteomics, a nutrigenomic research and development company employing more than 40 scientists and physicians at its research centers in the U.S. and Europe, developed Ostera. Drawing on the anti-inflammatory properties of hops (Belgium is renowned for its beer breweries) as well as other unique nutritional agents such as berberine and acacia, Ostera is a potent promoter of bone-remodeling.

Highly purified and specially tweaked extracts of hops are a promising new avenue for treatment of inflammation in conditions ranging from arthritis to Alzheimer's disease to atherosclerosis. I guess it was about time that beer-consumers tried to regain the high ground from red wine enthusiasts who

are beneficiaries of the French Paradox.

When Oстера was field-tested on 77 postmenopausal women with low estrogen, it produced dramatic improvements (greater than 40 percent) in markers of bone turnover. It is our hope at the Hoffman Center that adding Oстера to our arsenal of natural therapies for osteoporosis will further enhance the already excellent results we are seeing, sometimes even after a few short months of treatment.

The Hoffman Center is one of the first practices in the country to incorporate Oстера as part of our comprehensive program for osteoporosis. To find out about this unique product, check our website