
Preface

Pharmacotherapy is one of the pillars of medical practice, undeniably helpful and sometimes lifesaving. The drawbacks of medication overuse are well-known, and side effects are often recognized (although unfortunately sometimes after extended exposure). Physicians' experience over long years is often rewarded by more insight, reminiscent of an admittedly strong quotation from Sir William Osler: "The young physician starts life with twenty drugs for each disease and the old physician ends life with one drug for twenty diseases."

During recent decades, the application of non-pharmacological and physical therapeutic measures has justifiably gained momentum, whether as independent measures or adjuvant to pharmacotherapy. In the mid 1990s, together with Professor Helmut W. Minne of Bad Pyrmont, Germany, we undertook an effort to start a working group in osteoporosis rehabilitation at the annual meeting of the American Society for Bone and Mineral Research (ASBMR). With the support of several colleagues from ASBMR and the Mayo Clinic Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes, Metabolism, & Nutrition and the Metabolic Bone Disease Clinic, in particular Dr. B. Lawrence Riggs, as well as the approval of the president of the society at the time, Dr. Michael Rosenblatt of Boston, we held our first meeting in San Francisco in 1998. Many more annual meetings followed. I was truly privileged with the collaborating leadership of Dr. Michael Pfeifer of Bad Pyrmont, Germany, which finally resulted in the concept of publication of this book.

We are indebted to the support of many of our colleagues in the Mayo Clinic Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes, Metabolism, & Nutrition and the Metabolic Bone Disease Clinic, including Drs. Steven Hodgson, Sundeep Khosla, and Bart Clarke, as well as European colleagues including Dr. Elizabeth Preisinger of Vienna, Austria; Dr. Mario Passeri of Parma, Italy; Dr. Piet Geusens of Maastricht, the Netherlands; Dr. Christian Kasperk of Heidelberg, Germany; Drs. Wolfgang Kemmler and Simon von Stengel of Erlangen, Germany; Dr. Yannis Dionyssiotis of Athens, Greece; Dr. Sabine Verschueren and coworkers of Leuven, Belgium; and Dr. Eiji Itoi, professor of orthopedic surgery, of Sendai, Japan. All of these authors attended our ASBMR Working Group on a regular basis and thus contributed to knowledge generation by their oral presentations on various topics, which were condensed finally into this book.

Essentially, this is a summary of all the experience we gained through our working group of over 15 years and reflects different attitudes, opinions, and

non-pharmacological treatment approaches worldwide for patients suffering from vertebral fractures due to osteoporosis. Our hope is that this work may contribute to an improvement in several parameters of quality of life for patients suffering from this deleterious disease, since, due to a constantly increasing life expectancy not only in Western but also in Asian civilizations, the numbers of patients are still on the rise. This represents a major socioeconomic burden for many societies as long as treatment options are focused mainly on more or less expensive drugs. In contrast, non-pharmacological approaches are relatively inexpensive; given a fixed amount of resource, many patients may be treated.

Musculoskeletal rehabilitation is a highly promising option in the management of patients with osteoporosis. Measures to improve quality of life are relentlessly assessed and advanced. We would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the work of colleagues and old and new friends in contributing chapters to this book.

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