

[IMAGE]

## Bone Loss Linked to Mental Decline?

Bone mass increases during childhood and adolescence, reaching its greatest mass when we're in our 30s and declining slowly but steadily as we age. Women have less bone mass than men at all ages and lose bone mass rapidly following menopause. In fact, after menopause this bone loss can occur at a rate of up to five percent per year, putting women at risk for osteoporosis (bone loss to the point that they become thin, brittle and prone to fracture).

If the threat of osteoporosis isn't distressing enough, consider a recent study published in the *Journal of the Geriatric Society*. More than 8,000 elderly women (all 65 years of age or older) evaluated the potential association between bone mineral density (BMD) and cognitive decline. BMD was measured at the beginning of the study (baseline) and again 4-6 years later, and vertebral fractures were determined with x-rays at year six. Women were also monitored for cognitive changes via several questionnaires given at different points during the study period.

Women with low BMD at baseline had up to 8% worse cognitive scores at baseline and up to 6% worse scores at follow-up than women with higher BMD at baseline. Women with vertebral fractures also revealed lower test scores and a greater overall risk of cognitive decline than women without any confirmed fractures.

Exercise and dietary supplementation (calcium) are potential options for women trying to prevent bone loss following menopause. This study suggests that preventing bone loss might help prevent some of the mental declines normally associated with aging. For a comprehensive evaluation of your exercise, diet and lifestyle needs as a woman, schedule an appointment with your chiropractor. And for more information about women's health, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/find/tellmeabout/women.html>

### *Reference:*

Yaffe K, Browner W, Cauley J, et al. Association between bone mineral density and cognitive decline in older women. *Journal of the American Geriatric Society*, 1999: Vol. 47, pp1176-1182.

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