GLOSSARY

T SCORE

A measure of bone mineral density; the number of standard deviations above or below the mean peak value for young adults of the same sex

aged 55–59 years, in whom much smaller increases in relative risk were seen. The authors speculate that hip joint cartilage might be more vulnerable to damage during youth.

Interestingly, tall individuals showed an age-independent increase in their relative risk of later total-hip arthroplasty. Flugsrud and colleagues suggest that tall individuals might not have proportionately thick joint cartilage, which could predispose them to develop OA.

Chrissie Giles

Original article Flugsrud GB *et al.* (2005) The impact of body mass index on later total hip arthroplasty for primary osteoarthritis: a cohort study in 1.2 million persons. *Arthritis Rheum* 54: 802–807

New onset or exacerbation of psoriasis during tumor necrosis factor inhibition

Physicians from Germany have reported nine cases of new onset or exacerbation of psoriatic skin lesions in patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) who have received tumor necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitors. This report is unexpected, since TNF inhibitors have proven efficacy for the treatment of both RA and psoriasis.

Each of the nine patients had a definite diagnosis of RA; eight were positive for rheumatoid factor and four patients were positive for antibodies to cyclic citrullinated peptide. Four patients had a previous history of psoriasis, although the condition had been inactive for several years. Before eruption of the psoriasis, none of the patients had any of the commonly known trigger factors for the condition.

The patients had received drug regimens containing one of the TNF inhibitors adalimumab, etanercept or infliximab. Three patients experienced psoriasis pustulosa, and six patients experienced psoriasis vulgaris. Some patients improved with withdrawal or reduction of the drug, and some improved with a change to a different anti-TNF agent.

The authors speculate that TNF inhibition might have influenced the manifestation of psoriatic skin lesions in these patients. This speculation contrasts with the reported benefit of TNF inhibitors for psoriasis, although the authors note that there is limited experience with TNF inhibitors for the treatment of pustular

manifestations of psoriasis. Further study of patients with new onset or aggravation of psoriasis during TNF inhibition is planned.

Rachel Murphy

Original article Kary S *et al.* (2006) New onset or exacerbation of psoriatic skin lesions in patients with definite rheumatoid arthritis receiving tumour necrosis factor α antagonists. *Ann Rheum Dis* 65: 405–407

BMD predicts osteoporosis in recently postmenopausal women

A third of healthy women have osteopenia during their first few postmenopausal years, but its clinical significance is unclear: osteopenia can lead to osteoporosis, but the short-term fracture risk is low and treatment has few apparent benefits. Abrahamsen *et al.* assessed the predictive value of bone mineral density (BMD) in recently postmenopausal women, as a marker to identify those at risk of developing osteoporosis or fracture within 10 years. Rates of bone loss vary, but since BMD decreases slowly over time, the authors speculated that a threshold value for BMD at menopause could be derived that would identify women at high risk of developing osteoporosis.

The 872 participants were recruited from the non-hormone-replacement-therapy arm of the Danish Osteoporosis Study. Baseline BMD predicted over three-quarters of the variation in BMD of the lumbar spine after 10 years; the authors suggest that this association is robust enough to be used for assessing prognosis. Women with a baseline BMD (at either the femoral neck or lumbar spine, whichever was lower) T SCORE above -1.4 had a $<10\%$ risk of developing osteoporosis or fracture within 10 years (69% of women). Women with a T score below this threshold had a 56% risk of developing osteoporosis or fracture.

The authors caution that a T score above -1.4 might not be associated with a similarly low risk of progression to osteoporosis in older women, or in those with other risk factors for osteoporosis.

Chrissie Giles

Original article Abrahamsen B *et al.* (2006) Ten-year prediction of osteoporosis from baseline bone mineral density: development of prognostic thresholds in healthy postmenopausal women. The Danish osteoporosis prevention study. *Osteoporos Int* 17: 245–251