

Nearly 1 in 4 postmenopausal women with fractures is obese

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Obesity is widely believed to be protective against fracture, although a recent study has documented a high prevalence of obesity in postmenopausal women with fragility fracture.

An international group of researchers has today presented research at the European Congress on [Osteoporosis](#) & Osteoarthritis (ECCEO11-IOF) that compares the prevalence and location of [fractures](#) in obese (BMI \geq 30 kg/m²) and non-obese postmenopausal women and examines specific risk factors for fracture.

A history of fracture after age 45 years was observed in 23% of obese and 24% of non-obese women. Nearly one in four postmenopausal women with fractures is obese. The upper arm, ankle and lower leg were significantly more likely to be affected in obese than non-obese women with a prevalent fracture, whereas fractures of the wrist, hip and pelvis were significantly less common than in non-obese women. When compared to non-obese women, obese women with a prevalent fracture were more likely to be current cortisone users, to report early menopause, to report fair or poor general health, to use arms to assist standing from a sitting position, and to report more than two falls in the past year.

The research demonstrates that obese [postmenopausal women](#) are almost as likely to fracture as non-obese women, and that poor mobility and increased risk of falls may play an important role. The findings have significant public health implications in view of the rapidly rising

numbers of obese people in the population.

More information: Fractures in obese postmenopausal women: prevalence, skeletal location and risk factors. J. Compston et al. Osteoporosis International [DOI 10.1007/s00198-011-1554-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00198-011-1554-9)

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