

## Fosamax: Femur Fractures And Osteonecrosis Of Jaw: Medical Journal Articles: May 2010 Update

### One Sees Mixed Findings About These Fosamax Side Effects From Various Research Reports And Case Studies

(Posted by Tom Lamb at [www.DrugInjuryWatch.com](http://www.DrugInjuryWatch.com) on May 8, 2011; see <http://bit.ly/mpinFm>)

Last month we wrote about [the status of the thousands of Fosamax lawsuits that have been filed against Merck](#) alleging that the use of this bisphosphonate drug by osteoporosis patients resulted in either atypical low-stress femur fractures or osteonecrosis of the jaw, commonly called ONJ.

In this article we provide an overview of the medical articles about these Fosamax side effects that have been published in the first part of 2011. As you will see, there is some difference of opinion found in these several research reports and case studies.

We begin with two recent articles about femur fractures, which is the common term for the atypical subtrochanteric femoral shaft fractures that are the subject of an increasing number of Fosamax cases filed against Merck:

(1) "[Oral bisphosphonates and risk of subtrochanteric or diaphyseal femur fractures in a population-based cohort](#)", published by *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research* in May 2011

From the Abstract: "There was no evidence of an increased risk of subtrochanteric or diaphyseal femur fractures in bisphosphonate users compared with raloxifene/calcitonin users. However, this study cannot exclude the possibility that long-term bisphosphonate use may increase the risk of these fractures."

(2) "[Bisphosphonate use and atypical fractures of the femoral shaft](#)", published by *The New England Journal of Medicine* in May 2011

A large Swedish cohort study found that the use of bisphosphonates for osteoporosis like Fosamax (alendronate) increased the risk of femoral shaft fractures by nearly 50-times; the absolute risk of developing a femur fracture, however, remained very small.

As for recent medical research regarding bisphosphonate-related osteonecrosis of the jaw (BRONJ), we direct you to these articles:

(3) March 2011 *Medscape* article about [International Association of Dental Research \(IADR\) 89th General Session and Exhibition: Abstract 890](#) (free registration required)

Oral bisphosphonates like Fosamax do not increase the risk for osteonecrosis of the jaw but study did find a six-times increased risk for ONJ in patients getting intravenous (IV) bisphosphonates.

(4) "[ONJ in Two Dental Practice-Based Research Network Regions](#)", published by the *Journal of Dental Research* in February 2011.

ONJ has been associated with all of the bisphosphonates, including Fosamax (alendronate); patients who had used oral bisphosphonates were 15.5 times more likely to have ONJ than those who had not -- albeit the absolute risk for ONJ from oral bisphosphonates is low.

We will continue to monitor the medical literature for developments concerning the association between Fosamax and low-stress femur fractures as well as Fosamax and the ONJ jaw injury.

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Attorney [Tom Lamb](#) represents people in personal injury and wrongful death cases involving unsafe prescription drugs or medication errors. The above article was posted originally on his blog, **Drug Injury Watch** – with live links and readers' Comments.  
<http://www.DrugInjuryWatch.com>