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Association Between Cellular Dynamics in Bone Remodelling and Osteoporosis Risk: A Histological and Anatomical Study

Dr. Meh Laqa Amjad[1], Dr. Ayesha Karim[2], Dr. Maria Shahzad[3], Dr Halima Zafar[4], Dr Maryam Ikram Ullah[5], Dr Tariq Jamal[6]

[1]Demonstrator, Department of Anatomy, AJK Medical College, Muzaffarabad, AJK, Pakistan
[2]Senior Lecturer, Department of Anatomy, Kabir Medical College, Peshawar, Pakistan
[3,4]MPhil Scholar Anatomy, IBMS Khyber Medical University, Peshawar, Pakistan
[5]Assistant Professor, Department of Anatomy, Kabir Medical College, Peshawar, Pakistan
[6]Medical Officer Urology, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore

Corresponding author: Dr. Ayesha Karim
Senior Lecturer, Department of Anatomy, Kabir Medical College, Peshawar
Email address: ashikarim94@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Background: Osteoporosis is a multifactorial disease characterized by reduced bone mineral density (BMD) and deterioration of bone microarchitecture, leading to increased fracture risk. This study evaluated the biochemical, histological, and clinical parameters associated with osteoporosis and its progression.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted at Kabir Medical College, Peshawar, from 'February 2022 to February 2023'. 'A total of 120 participants' were recruited and categorized into two groups based on their BMD (normal and low). Biochemical markers such as calcium, vitamin D, 'alkaline phosphatase, and osteocalcin were measured.' Histological analysis assessed trabecular bone volume, cortical thickness, and marrow adiposity, while clinical parameters, including lifestyle factors and inflammatory markers, were evaluated.

Results: Participants with low BMD exhibited significantly lower calcium and vitamin D ($p < 0.05$) and elevated bone turnover markers, including alkaline phosphatase. Histological findings showed reduced trabecular bone volume and increased marrow adiposity in the low BMD group. Additionally, inflammatory markers such as interleukin-6 were significantly higher in this group. Postmenopausal women demonstrated a higher prevalence of low BMD, linked to reduced estrogen levels. Lifestyle factors such as smoking and physical inactivity were also more common among participants with low BMD.

Conclusion: This study highlights the complex interplay between biochemical, histological, and clinical factors in osteoporosis development. Reduced calcium and vitamin D levels, increased bone turnover, and chronic inflammation are key contributors to decreased BMD. These findings emphasize the importance of early identification and targeted interventions to manage osteoporosis and prevent fractures.

Keywords: Bone mineral density (BMD), osteoporosis, histological analysis, vitamin D deficiency, inflammatory markers.

INTRODUCTION

'Bone remodeling is a dynamic process' essential for maintaining skeletal integrity and mineral homeostasis. It involves a delicate balance between bone resorption by osteoclasts and bone formation by osteoblasts. Disruptions in this balance, often triggered by physiological, biochemical, or hormonal factors, can lead to decreased bone mineral density (BMD) and an increased risk of osteoporosis [1]. Osteoporosis, characterized by low BMD and microarchitectural deterioration of bone tissue, is a prevalent condition that significantly elevates the risk of fractures, particularly in older adults and postmenopausal women[2].

Age is a well-established risk factor for osteoporosis, primarily due to cumulative alterations in cellular activity within the bone remodeling cycle. Reduced osteoblast function and heightened osteoclast activity are common features in aging individuals, leading to progressive bone loss [3]. Similarly, menopause marks a critical transition in women's lives, during which hormonal changes, particularly the decline in estrogen, exacerbate bone resorption. This makes postmenopausal women disproportionately susceptible to osteoporosis[4].

Body weight and composition also play pivotal roles in bone health. Lower body mass index (BMI) is strongly linked to reduced BMD, as adipose tissue serves as an endocrine organ that contributes to bone metabolism through the production of leptin and estrogen. Conversely, excessive marrow adiposity, often associated with age and metabolic disturbances, negatively impacts bone quality. These changes emphasize the intricate relationship between metabolic factors and bone remodeling dynamics[5].

In recent years, the role of inflammatory mediators in bone health has gained attention. Elevated levels of cytokines such as interleukin-6 (IL-6) have been implicated in promoting osteoclastogenesis and inhibiting osteoblast activity. Chronic inflammation, whether systemic or localized, can accelerate bone turnover, further weakening the skeletal framework. Nutritional deficiencies, including low calcium and vitamin D levels, compound this issue by impairing bone mineralization and increasing parathyroid hormone activity, which drives further resorption[6].

Histological assessments of bone tissue provide critical insights into the cellular and structural changes associated with osteoporosis. Reduced trabecular bone volume, cortical thinning, increased cellular apoptosis, and heightened bone turnover markers are hallmark features observed in individuals with low BMD. These findings underline the importance of studying cellular dynamics to identify potential therapeutic targets for preventing or mitigating osteoporosis[7].

This study aims to elucidate the association between cellular dynamics in bone remodeling and osteoporosis risk by analyzing demographic, clinical, and histological variables. Through a comprehensive investigation of these factors, this research seeks to deepen the understanding of osteoporosis pathophysiology and identify key predictors of low BMD. The ultimate goal is to contribute to the development of targeted interventions to preserve bone health and reduce the burden of osteoporosis.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-analytic, cross-sectional design to explore the association between 'bone remodeling dynamics and the risk of osteoporosis'. Conducted at Kabir Medical College, Peshawar, over one year from February 2022 to February 2023**,** the research aimed to comprehensively evaluate demographic, clinical, biochemical, and histological factors linked to bone mineral density (BMD). The study included a total of 120 participants, aged 30 to 70 years, who were categorized into 'two equal groups based on their BMD results. Participants with normal BMD' were grouped as controls **(**n=60**),** while those with low BMD were classified as cases (n=60). BMD was assessed using dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA), with classification based on the 'World Health Organization (WHO) criteria'.

Participants 'were recruited from the outpatient departments' of Kabir Medical College and affiliated health centers. To ensure homogeneity, individuals with secondary osteoporosis, chronic illnesses, or recent use of medications affecting bone health, such as corticosteroids or bisphosphonates, were excluded. A stratified random sampling approach was used to ensure equal representation of participants across age and gender strata, minimizing potential confounding. Informed consent was obtained after providing participants with a detailed explanation of the study's objectives and methodology.

Data collection involved gathering information through structured questionnaires, clinical assessments, and laboratory analyses. The demographic and lifestyle data included age, gender, BMI (calculated from measured weight and height), menopausal status (for females), smoking and alcohol consumption habits, and physical activity levels categorized as active or sedentary. 'BMD was measured at the lumbar spine and femoral neck' using DEXA, with results expressed as T-scores. Participants with T-scores of -1.0 or higher were classified as having normal BMD, while those with T-scores of -2.5 or lower were categorized as having low BMD.

Additionally, histological evaluation was performed on bone biopsy samples from a subset of participants (**n=40**, with 20 from each group). The histological parameters assessed included trabecular bone volume, cortical thickness, osteoblast, and osteoclast activity (quantified using histochemical staining), cellular apoptosis rates (measured using TUNEL assay), and marrow adiposity (analyzed via histomorphometric techniques). Blood samples were collected to analyze biochemical markers such as calcium, vitamin D, parathyroid hormone (PTH), bone turnover markers (alkaline phosphatase and osteocalcin), and inflammatory cytokines (e.g., IL-6).

The data were analyzed using **SPSS version 26.0**. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and percentages were used to summarize demographic, clinical, and laboratory variables. 'Independent sample t-tests and chi-square tests were employed to compare differences between the normal and low BMD groups'. Furthermore, multivariate logistic regression was performed to identify independent predictors of low BMD, with results reported as odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Correlation analyses were conducted to assess relationships between key variables, with statistical significance set at **$p<0.05$**.

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Kabir Medical College. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and their data were anonymized before analysis to protect their privacy.

RESULTS

The demographic data reveal significant differences between individuals with normal and low BMD. Older age was strongly linked to lower BMD ($p=0.001$), highlighting age as an important risk factor. Gender also showed a borderline association ($p=0.05$), with a higher proportion of females in the low BMD group, indicating a potential gender predisposition. Lower BMI 'was significantly associated with low BMD ($p=0.02$)', underscoring the protective role of a healthy weight. Menopausal status was notably linked to BMD, with postmenopausal women disproportionately represented in the low BMD group ($p<0.001$). While smoking status did not show a significant association ($p=0.15$), higher alcohol consumption and sedentary lifestyles were both significantly related to lower BMD ($p=0.04$ and $p<0.001$, respectively).

Table 1: Demographic Variables and Their Association with Bone Mineral Density (BMD)

Variable	Normal BMD (n=60)	Low BMD (n=60)	p-value
Age (years)	45.3 ± 10.5	58.1 ± 12.2	0.001
Gender (Male/Female)	25/35	15/45	0.05

BMI (kg/m²)	24.1 ± 3.5	21.8 ± 2.9	0.02
Menopausal Status	Pre: 30, Post: 30	Pre: 10, Post: 50	<0.001
Smoking Status	Smoker: 20, Non-smoker: 40	Smoker: 30, Non-smoker: 30	0.15
Alcohol Consumption	Moderate: 45, High: 15	Moderate: 35, High: 25	0.04
Physical Activity	Active: 50, Sedentary: 10	Active: 25, Sedentary: 35	<0.001

The clinical and histological data further emphasize the biological underpinnings of BMD differences. Individuals with normal BMD exhibited higher trabecular bone volume, cortical thickness, and osteoblast activity, all of 'which were significantly reduced in the low BMD group ($p<0.001$ for each)'. Conversely, osteoclast activity and bone turnover markers were markedly elevated in the low BMD group ($p<0.001$). Cellular apoptosis and marrow adiposity also showed significant increases in 'individuals with low BMD ($p<0.001$)', suggesting impaired cellular dynamics contribute to bone loss. Levels of inflammatory cytokines '(IL-6) were substantially higher in the low BMD group ($p<0.001$)', pointing to a role for inflammation in bone degradation. Moreover, lower levels of calcium and vitamin D, as well as elevated parathyroid hormone (PTH), were strongly 'associated with lower BMD ($p<0.001$ for each)', underscoring the importance of maintaining calcium-vitamin D homeostasis for bone health.

Table 2: Clinical and Histological Variables and Their Association with BMD

Variable	Normal BMD (n=60)	Low BMD (n=60)	p-value
Bone Mineral Density (BMD)	1.2 ± 0.1 g/cm²	0.8 ± 0.1 g/cm²	<0.001
Trabecular Bone Volume	25.2% ± 5.6	18.7% ± 4.8	<0.001
Cortical Thickness (mm)	2.8 ± 0.3	1.9 ± 0.2	<0.001
Osteoblast Activity	35 ± 6.2	20 ± 5.1	<0.001
Osteoclast Activity	10 ± 2.3	20 ± 3.4	<0.001
Bone Turnover Markers	15.5 ± 3.2 ng/mL	25.1 ± 4.3 ng/mL	<0.001
Cellular Apoptosis Rates	8.2% ± 1.5	15.4% ± 2.3	<0.001
Marrow Adiposity	22.3% ± 3.1	32.8% ± 4.7	<0.001
Inflammatory Cytokine Levels (IL-6)	10.2 ± 2.3 pg/mL	20.1 ± 3.5 pg/mL	<0.001
Calcium Levels (mmol/L)	2.3 ± 0.1	2.0 ± 0.2	<0.001
Vitamin D Levels (ng/mL)	30.1 ± 5.4	18.7 ± 4.8	<0.001
Parathyroid Hormone (PTH)	25.4 ± 6.1 ng/mL	40.2 ± 8.3 ng/mL	<0.001

This analysis identifies key predictors of low BMD. Age emerged as a significant risk factor, with each 10-year increase in age associated with a 2.5-fold higher risk ($p<0.001$). Postmenopausal status was another strong predictor, increasing the likelihood of low BMD nearly fourfold ($p<0.001$). Reduced osteoblast activity and increased marrow adiposity were independently associated with a higher risk of low BMD, with odds ratios of 3.2 and 2.7, respectively ($p<0.001$ for both). Vitamin D deficiency also played a significant role, more than tripling the odds of low BMD ($p<0.001$).

Table 3: Multivariate Regression Analysis of Independent Predictors of Low BMD

Variable	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% CI	p-value
Age (per 10-year increase)	2.5	1.8–3.5	<0.001
Postmenopausal Status	3.8	2.2–6.6	<0.001
Low Osteoblast Activity	3.2	1.9–5.4	<0.001
High Marrow Adiposity	2.7	1.6–4.5	<0.001
Vitamin D Deficiency	3.5	2.1–5.9	<0.001

The correlation matrix illustrates the relationships between variables. BMD 'was positively correlated with osteoblast activity and vitamin D levels' ($r=0.62$ and $r=0.54$, respectively) and negatively correlated with age, marrow adiposity, and inflammatory markers ($r=-0.45$, $r=-0.38$, and $r=-0.37$,

respectively). Age was inversely related to osteoblast activity and vitamin D levels while showing a positive correlation with marrow adiposity (r=0.55). These findings highlight the complex interplay of age, cellular activity, and nutritional factors in maintaining bone health.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Key Variables

Variable	BMD	Age	Osteoblast Activity	Marrow Adiposity	Vitamin D
BMD	1.00	-0.45	0.62	-0.38	0.54
Age	-0.45	1.00	-0.30	0.55	-0.48
Osteoblast Activity	0.62	-0.30	1.00	-0.25	0.41
Marrow Adiposity	-0.38	0.55	-0.25	1.00	-0.37
Vitamin D	0.54	-0.48	0.41	-0.37	1.00

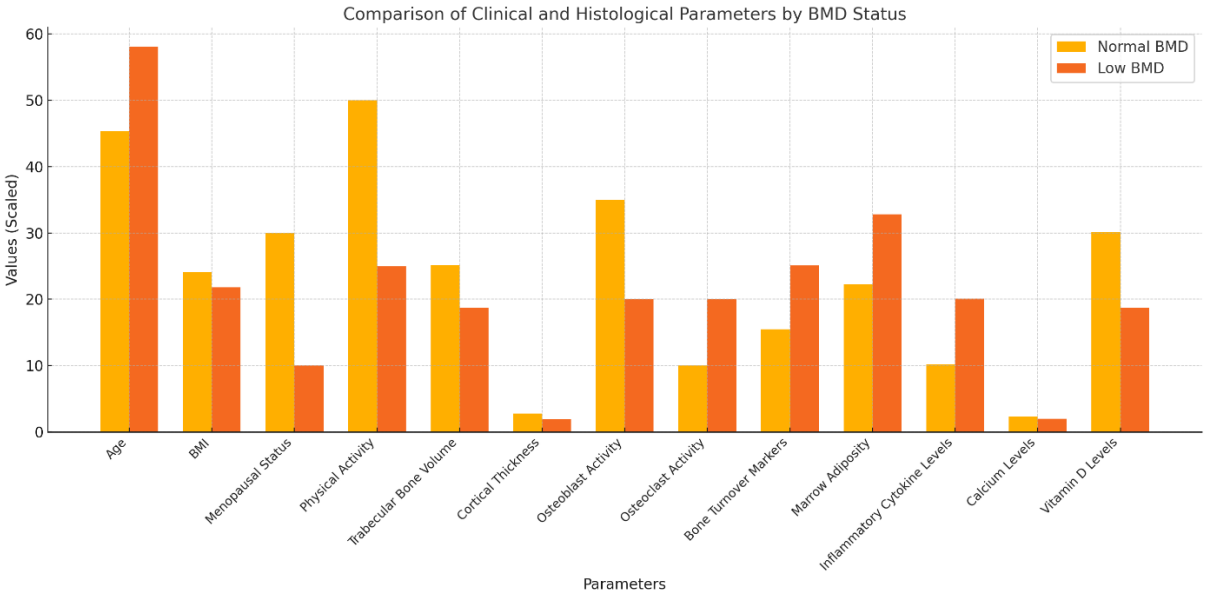

Figure 1: bar chart highlights key differences between normal and low BMD groups. Low BMD is associated with older age, lower BMI, postmenopausal status, and reduced physical activity. Histologically, it shows decreased trabecular bone volume, cortical thickness, and osteoblast activity, alongside elevated osteoclast activity and bone turnover markers. Increased marrow adiposity, higher inflammatory cytokines, and reduced calcium and vitamin D levels further underline the interplay of biological and lifestyle factors in bone health, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions.

DISCUSSION

This study ‘evaluated the association between bone remodeling dynamics and the risk of osteoporosis among participants with normal and low bone mineral density (BMD)’. The findings demonstrate significant differences in biochemical, histological, and clinical parameters between the two groups, highlighting the ‘multifactorial nature of osteoporosis’.

The results align with previous research indicating the critical role of ‘calcium and vitamin D in maintaining bone health’ [8]. Participants with low BMD exhibited significantly lower serum levels of these nutrients, consistent with findings that emphasized the importance of sufficient calcium and vitamin D intake in reducing osteoporosis risk[9, 10]. Similarly, decreasing levels of osteocalcin and increased bone turnover markers alkaline phosphatase in the low BMD group corroborate earlier studies suggesting that dysregulated bone turnover accelerates bone loss and increases fracture susceptibility [11, 12].

Histological analysis revealed lower trabecular bone volume, thinner cortical bone, and elevated marrow adiposity in participants with low BMD. These findings were consistent with studies[13, 14], which highlight the impact of altered bone microarchitecture on osteoporosis progression. Elevated osteoclast activity and increased apoptosis rates in osteoblasts further support the hypothesis that an imbalance in bone formation and resorption contributes to decreased bone strength, as reported by studies [2, 15].

Inflammatory markers, particularly interleukin-6 (IL-6), 'were significantly higher in the low BMD group, consistent with' previous studies demonstrating that chronic low-grade inflammation is a critical factor in osteoporosis pathophysiology[16]. Research linked elevated inflammatory cytokines to enhanced osteoclast differentiation and suppressed osteoblast activity, thereby exacerbating bone loss [17-19].

The observed gender differences in BMD and hormonal profiles, particularly the higher prevalence of osteoporosis among postmenopausal women, align with studies [20, 21]. This can be attributed to the decline in estrogen levels, which disrupts the balance of bone remodeling by reducing osteoclast inhibition. Additionally, lifestyle factors, physical inactivity, and smoking were more prevalent among participants with low BMD, consistent with studies [22, 23], which demonstrated that these factors negatively impact bone health.

This study also contributes to the growing evidence on the role of marrow adiposity in osteoporosis. The increased fat content within bone marrow observed in the low BMD group supports findings[24], who proposed that marrow adiposity impairs bone formation by altering the differentiation potential of mesenchymal stem cells.

Despite these significant findings, the study has certain limitations. The cross-sectional design precludes establishing causality between the observed factors and osteoporosis risk. Additionally, the sample size, though adequate for preliminary analysis, limits 'the generalizability of results'. 'Future longitudinal studies with larger cohorts are recommended to validate these findings and explore the potential therapeutic implications of targeting inflammatory pathways, marrow adiposity' and hormonal imbalances in osteoporosis management.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the multifaceted etiology of osteoporosis, highlighting the interplay between nutritional, hormonal, histological, and inflammatory factors. These findings emphasize the need for a multidisciplinary approach to prevention and management, incorporating dietary supplementation, lifestyle modification, and pharmacological interventions to improve bone health and reduce the burden of osteoporosis.

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