

Expert gathering to stem bone health crisis in the world's most populous & fastest ageing region

APCO Scientific Summit in Singapore

Leading bone experts from the Asia Pacific are convening in Singapore today (Saturday, December 10, 2022) for the Asia Pacific Consortium on Osteoporosis (APCO) Scientific Summit, to further their vision of reducing the burden of osteoporosis and fragility fractures for 2023 and beyond, in the world's most populous and fastest ageing region.¹

Marking APCO's first 'physical' Summit since May 2019 when the organisation was launched, the APCO members, representing 19 Asia Pacific countries and regions, will hear from a host of eminent speakers between 9:15 - 10:25am SGT today, at One Farrer Hotel, Singapore, including the Summit's Guest of Honour, Singapore's Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung.

According to APCO Executive Committee Chairperson, Senior Consultant, Department of Endocrinology, Director, Osteoporosis and Bone Metabolism Unit, Singapore General Hospital, and 2021 International Osteoporosis Foundation Olof Johnell Science Award winner, Professor Manju Chandran, Singapore, "A perfect storm of a rise in osteoporosis among Asia Pacific populations is expected to occur due to the region's rapidly aging population, mounting urbanisation, and subsequent increase in sedentary lifestyles."²

"Unless urgent steps are taken, we will be facing an epidemic of osteoporotic fractures that could have been avoided through appropriate preventive measures, early diagnosis, and treatment.

"APCO members are charged with developing tangible solutions to the challenges facing osteoporosis management in the world's most populous, linguistically, and culturally diverse region. Our committed group of 46 osteoporosis experts representing 19 Asia Pacific countries and regions, are confident we can counter these challenges, if armed with support from local governments, policy makers, healthcare providers, philanthropic organisations, pharmaceutical companies, and other stakeholders from both the private and public healthcare sectors throughout the region," said Dr Chandran.

Osteoporosis – the most common disease – is characterised by porous and brittle bones, whose density and quality are poor, resulting in structural skeletal deterioration.¹ The disease is greatly under-diagnosed, and under-treated in Asia, even among those at highest risk who have already fractured.³ Concerningly, over the next two decades, a staggering 319 million people aged 50+ from the Asia Pacific are projected to be at high risk of osteoporotic fracture.⁴ Moreover, the number of hip fractures are projected to more than double in Asia, from 1.13 million in 2018, to 2.54 million in 2050.⁴

"Singapore – a country where one in five people are 65 years of age – has one of the highest rates of osteoporotic fractures in the world, which is predicted to increase exponentially in the next two decades.⁵ Urgent action must be therefore, be taken to curb the immense socio-economic and physical impacts posed by the disease, and its complication, fragility fractures," Dr Chandran said.

APCO Executive Committee member and Chief Executive Officer of the world's largest, non-governmental organisation dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis and related musculoskeletal diseases, Dr Philippe Halbout, Switzerland, explains the International Osteoporosis Foundation's (IOF) vision is "a world without fragility fractures, in which healthy mobility is a reality for all.

"Given the Asia Pacific region will face the brunt of osteoporotic fractures over the next few decades, the IOF recognises urgent action is required to stem this tide. It is for this reason, that we continue to lend strong support to APCO – an organisation that in little more than three years, has achieved significant milestones in its fight against the silent disease that is osteoporosis."

Chairman and Head of Endocrinology, Diabetes Division, MAX Healthcare, Padma Booshan recipient (one of India's highest civilian awards), IOF President's Award winner, and APCO member, Prof Ambrish Mithal, India, shares similar concerns about the trends impacting musculoskeletal health in the world's fastest ageing region.

“Low levels of calcium intake and vitamin D, and high levels of smoking, which have a detrimental impact on bone and muscle health, are prevalent in several countries in the region. Striking differences, however, exist including the prevalence of fractures, robustness of healthcare systems, and access to care.

“In [2009](#) and [2013](#) respectively, the IOF released status reports (the Asia Pacific Audit) examining the overall patterns of fracture prevalence and osteoporosis care in the region. While progress has been made in several fields over the past decade, concerningly, huge gaps remain. In most countries, osteoporosis is still a low priority, and unfortunately, competes for attention with better understood diseases, such as heart disease and cancer. Consequently, bone health attracts little government support and funding,” Prof Mithal said.

“The APCO Summit therefore, represents an ideal opportunity for representatives from multiple countries in the Asia Pacific, to come together, to share experiences, and to brainstorm ideas to tackle this monumental, escalating public health issue.”

APCO Summit recommendations to address the projected growing burden of osteoporosis and fractures in the Asia Pacific will focus on:

- **Education and training of healthcare professionals;**
- **Quality improvement and secondary fracture prevention;**
- **Prioritising the prevention of musculoskeletal disease at a policy level;**
- **Enhancing research to amass evidence;**
- **Improving diagnosis and treatment accessibility and reimbursement;**
- **Creating national prevention programs; and**
- **Heightening public awareness and patient support.**

About APCO

The Asia Pacific Consortium on Osteoporosis' (APCO) mission is to engage with relevant stakeholders, including healthcare providers, policy makers and the public, to help develop, and implement, country and region-specific programs for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis, and its complication of fragility fractures, in the Asia Pacific. Since APCO's formation in May 2019, the organisation has developed:

- [APCO Guidelines](#) to address current gaps and unmet needs relating to osteoporosis clinical guidelines in the Asia Pacific.
- [The APCO Framework](#) – a pan-Asia Pacific 'Framework' for the implementation of minimum clinical standards across the region;
- [APCO Bone Health QI Tool Kit](#) to enable healthcare providers worldwide, to benchmark their practices against the clinical standards proposed in The APCO Framework;
- [APCO HCP Peer to Peer Education Modules](#) – a world-first, interactive, educational osteoporosis resource for healthcare professionals;

To learn APCO's plans for ongoing multi-sector, healthcare professional engagement and cooperation to stem the looming bone health crisis in the Asia Pacific region, commencing next year, and beyond, [attend the Scientific Summit, and/or tee up an in-person, or virtual interview, with Prof Chandran, Dr Halbout or Prof Mithal.](#)

For more information about APCO, head to:

W apcobonehealth.org or LinkedIn [asia-pacific-consortium-on-osteoporosis](https://www.linkedin.com/company/asia-pacific-consortium-on-osteoporosis)

EXPERTS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW:	Prof Manju Chandran Dr Philippe Halbout Prof Ambrish Mithal
WHAT:	APCO Scientific Summit to reduce the burden of osteoporosis & fragility fractures for 2023 & beyond, in the world's most populous and fastest ageing region
WHERE:	One Farrer Hotel, Level 6, Read & Spottiswoode Room, 1 Farrer Park Station Road, Singapore
WHEN:	Saturday, December 10, 2022 from 9:15 – 10:25 am + 1:1 interviews thereafter
RSVP:	APCO Secretariat, Ms Karen Mok secretariat@apcobonehealth.org or +65 (8858) 0997
MEDIA CONTACT & INTERVIEWS	APCO Communications Director, Ms Kirsten Bruce kirstenbruce@vivacommunications.com.au or +61 (0)401 717 566

References

1. International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF). *A fracture every 3 seconds worldwide. That's osteoporosis!* 2019 [cited Dec, 2022]; Available from: <https://tinyurl.com/55hh4psc>.
2. Chandran M, et al., *Development of the Asia Pacific Consortium on Osteoporosis (APCO) Framework: clinical standards of care for the screening, diagnosis, and management of osteoporosis in the Asia-Pacific region.* *Osteoporos Int.*, 2021. 32(7): p. 1249-1275.
3. International Osteoporosis Foundation (IOF). *Key statistics for Asia.* [cited Oct, 2022]; Available from: <https://www.osteoporosis.foundation/facts-statistics/key-statistic-for-asia>.
4. Cheung, C.-L., et al., *An updated hip fracture projection in Asia: The Asian Federation of Osteoporosis Societies study.* *Osteoporosis and sarcopenia*, 2018. 4(1): p. 16-21.
5. Chandran, M., et al., *The health and economic burden of osteoporotic fractures in Singapore and the potential impact of increasing treatment rates through more pharmacological options.* *Arch Osteoporos*, 2019. 14(1): p. 114.