Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
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FOI/38492

04 November 2026

Femoral Stress Fractures Associated with Bisphosphonate Use

I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for information relating to femoral stress fractures, including atypical femoral fractures, associated with the use of alendronic acid and other bisphosphonate medications.

I would be grateful if you could provide the following information for patients treated within your Trust:

1. Femoral stress fractures

- **How many patients have sustained femoral stress fractures (in either leg) which have been attributed to, or suspected to be associated with, the use of alendronic acid or other bisphosphonate medications?**
- **Please provide the figures for the last 5, 10, 15 and 20 years.**

2. Bilateral femoral stress fractures

- **How many patients have sustained bilateral femoral stress fractures (affecting both femurs) which have been attributed to, or suspected to be associated with, the use of alendronic acid or other bisphosphonate medications?**
- **Please provide the figures for the last 5, 10, 15 and 20 years.**

3. Surgical intervention involving metal rods

- **How many patients have required surgical intervention involving the insertion of metal rods (intramedullary nails or similar fixation devices) into one or both femurs as a result of stress fractures attributed to, or suspected to be associated with, the use of alendronic acid or other bisphosphonate medications?**
- **Please provide the figures for the last 5, 10, 15 and 20 years, distinguishing, where possible, between patients who required rods in one leg and those who required rods in both legs.**

Additional information

Where possible, I would appreciate the following:

- **A breakdown of the figures by individual medication, distinguishing alendronic acid from other bisphosphonates.**

- **A distinction between cases where a causal link to bisphosphonate use has been formally established and cases where the medication was suspected to have contributed.**
- **Confirmation of whether the figures relate to unique patients or total fracture incidents.**

For clarity, the time periods requested are cumulative, with the 5-year period being the most recent five years and the 20-year period being the most recent twenty years from the date of this request. Patients should not be counted more than once within each relevant category and time period, where the available records allow this.

If the Trust does not routinely record whether a fracture was caused by bisphosphonate use, I would be grateful if you could provide any available figures for atypical femoral fractures or femoral stress fractures in patients prescribed these medications, along with an explanation of what data is held.

The request spans historical electronic records that are archived and would require an excessive number of hours to make determination of relevancy for this request as 'stress fracture' is not a category of fracture that is distinguished with records and then would require a manual retrieval and review process of a substantial number of records

This would exceed the costs limit specified in the FOI act.

We estimate that compliance with this request for information would exceed the appropriate costs limit. Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information 2000, the limit has been specified as £450 and represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 18 hours in determining whether we hold the information, locating, retrieving and extracting this information.

We suggest that the timeframe be narrowed or be less specific in the information required.