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Clinical experience with microindentation in vivo in humans

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Review

Clinical experience with microindentation in vivo in humans

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Abstract

Densitometry and imaging techniques are currently used in clinical settings to measure bone quantity and spatial structure. Recently, reference point indentation has opened the possibility of directly assessing the mechanical characteristics of cortical bone in living individuals, adding a new dimension to the assessment of bone strength. Impact microindentation was specifically developed for clinical studies and has been tested in several populations where there are discrepancies between bone density and fracture propensity, such as type 2 diabetes, atypical femoral fracture, stress fractures, glucocorticoids treatment, patients with osteopenia and fragility fractures, and individuals infected with HIV, among others. Microindentation will complement, not replace, existing bone analysis methods, particularly where bone mineral density does not fully explain fracture propensity. The available evidence provides solid proof of concept; future studies will fully define the role of microindentation for the assessment of bone health both in clinics and in research.

Highlights

- Reference Point Indentation techniques for direct measurement of bone tissue mechanical properties have been tested in humans.
- Low microindentation values have been found in situations where bone density does not explain fracture propensity.
- Microindentation may complement available techniques for a full assessment of bone health.

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