

## From the Editor-in-Chief

**C**ommunication on the use of bisphosphonates has become skewed toward the risk of osteonecrosis of the jaw (ON-J). While this is an important clinical problem, it should not be allowed to deny patients the important benefits of these drugs or prevent researchers from investigating the potential benefits yet to be gained from bisphosphonates.

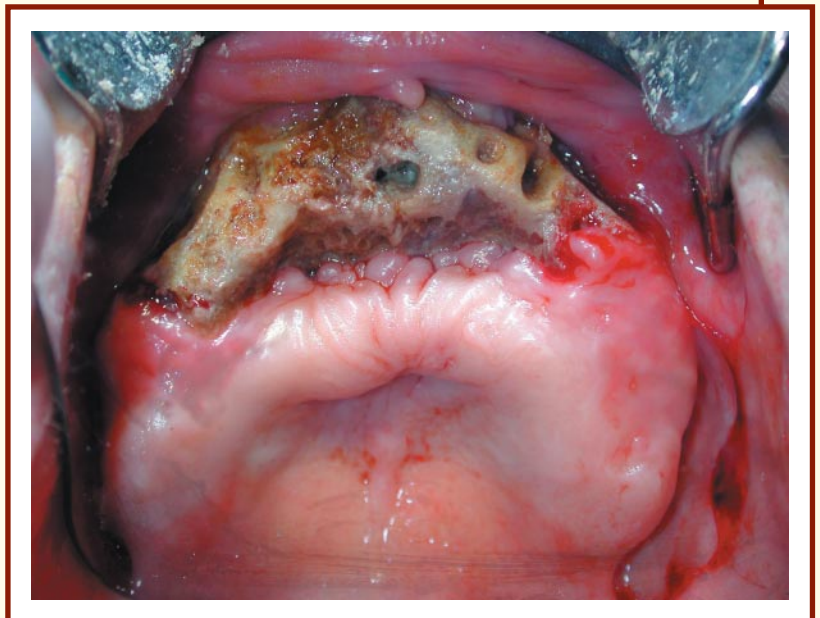
Bisphosphonates have done enormous good in fighting hypercalcemia in malignancy, decreasing bone pain, and decreasing the risk of often catastrophic pathologic fractures of the femoral neck or spine. In oral and maxillofacial surgery, bisphosphonates may show promise in the treatment of giant cell lesions among other pathologic conditions. Bisphosphonates may also offer potential roles in support of maxillofacial reconstructive surgery.

Areas such as distraction osteogenesis, bone grafting and implantology have active and exciting research endeavors in process involving the use of bisphosphonates.

Nonetheless, we face the troubling problem of ON-J, made more difficult by the limited information available as well as its sometimes confusing dissemination. While much has been learned regarding the effects of bisphosphonates on the jaws in the last four years, it is time for some perspective on this issue. Unknown factors still exist that preclude truly evidence-based treatment.

In this number of *Clinical Cases of Mineral and Bone Metabolism* (CCMBM) we have brought together a miscellaneous collection of original Minireviews on ON-J presented by a multidisciplinary group of experts in the field. You will find articles on definition, epidemiology, mechanisms and molecules, diagnostic approaches and therapeutic interventions in ON-J. The wealth of information generated is opening new possibilities for the knowledge about the normal history of BRON-J.

There is no doubt that bisphosphonate therapy will continue to show substantial clinical benefits and grow in use. As far as we know today, the benefits of bisphosphonates still outweigh the risks when they are used appropriately. It is, therefore, imperative that we establish prevention and early identification of patients at risk of ON-J. The research agenda aimed at filling the considerable gaps in knowledge regarding this disorder is dense.



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