

bone marrow fat of the L4, the fourth vertebra in the lumbar section of the spine. Then, the bone mineral density of the L4 was assessed using quantitative computed tomography (QCT), which measures bone mass and is used to assess bone loss.

The imaging revealed that women with more visceral fat had increased bone marrow fat and decreased bone mineral density. However, there was no significant correlation between either subcutaneous fat or total fat and bone marrow fat or bone mineral density.

"Our results showed that having a lot of belly fat is more detrimental to bone health than having more superficial fat or fat around the hips," Dr. Bredella said.

According to the National Women's Health Information Center, 10 million Americans have osteoporosis and 18 million more have low bone mass, placing them at risk for the disease.

"It is important for the public to be aware that excess belly fat is a risk factor for bone loss, as well as heart disease and diabetes," Dr. Bredella said.

While bone loss is more common in women, the research team is currently conducting a study to determine whether belly fat is also a risk factor for bone loss in men.

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