Editorial: Paget's disease of bone

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Metabolic bone diseases result from a disturbed balance between the processes of bone formation and bone resorption. Osteoporosis is by far the most frequent metabolic bone disease; other examples of this group of disorders are primary and secondary hyperparathyroidism, renal osteodystrophy and Paget's disease of bone. In contrast to the aforementioned conditions, Paget's disease is a localized disorder that affects one or a few bones but never the entire skeleton.

In the first paper of this thematic issue of the *Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift*, Nebot Valenzuela reviews the epidemiology and pathogenesis of Paget's disease. The prevalence of the disease increases with age. Compared to other areas of the world, it is most frequent in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Histopathologic studies demonstrate that Paget's disease is characterized by an extremely high rate of bone remodelling, resulting in a chaotic bone (micro)architecture.

The article of Winn and coworkers explores imaging of Paget's disease and critically discusses the relative merits of radiographs, nuclear medicine bone scans, computed tomography and magnetic reso-

nance imaging. In Paget's disease, an initial lytic phase is followed by a mixed and a late sclerotic phase. Although the different phases have distinct imaging features, disorganisation of bone structure is a common attribute.

In the third paper of this thematic issue, Muschitz et al. provide a clinical practice guideline for management of the disease and its complications. In addition to imaging studies, biochemical evaluations are crucial for the diagnosis. Bisphosphonates are now considered as the standard treatment for active Paget's disease.

In many publications, Paget's disease of bone has been regarded as the second most frequent metabolic bone disorder. I am convinced that this thematic issue covering basic as well as clinical aspects will increase the awareness of this remarkable and unique bone disease, and will stimulate research activities for the benefit of affected patients.

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