

# World Journal of *Clinical Cases*

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## Contents

Thrice Monthly Volume 10 Number 21 July 26, 2022

## OPINION REVIEW

- 7187 Effects of glucocorticoids on leukocytes: Genomic and non-genomic mechanisms  
*Jia WY, Zhang JJ*

## MINIREVIEWS

- 7195 Apheresis: A cell-based therapeutic tool for the inflammatory bowel disease  
*Yasmin F, Najeeb H, Naeem U, Moeed A, Koritala T, Surani S*
- 7209 *Helicobacter pylori* infection and small intestinal bacterial overgrowth—more than what meets the eye  
*Dharan M, Wozny D*
- 7215 Anatomy of the anterolateral ligament of the knee joint  
*Park JG, Han SB, Rhim HC, Jeon OH, Jang KM*

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Clinical and Translational Research

- 7224 Molecular mechanisms of Biyu decoction as treatment for psoriasis: A network pharmacology and molecular docking study  
*Wang Z, Zhang HM, Guo YR, Li LL*
- 7242 Expression of hepatocyte nuclear factor 4 alpha, wingless-related integration site, and  $\beta$ -catenin in clinical gastric cancer  
*Hu Q, Li LL, Peng Z, Yi P*

## Case Control Study

- 7256 Improved Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index scores on first postoperative night achieved by propofol anesthesia in patients undergoing ambulatory gynecologic surgery  
*Hu CH, Chou WY*
- 7265 Efficacy of Guhong injection *versus* Butylphthalide injection for mild ischemic stroke: A multicenter controlled study  
*Zhang WW, Xin J, Zhang GY, Zhai QJ, Zhang HM, Wu CS*

## Retrospective Study

- 7275 Clinical values of Barcelona Clinic Liver Cancer subgroup and up-to-7 criteria in intermediate stage hepatocellular carcinoma with transcatheter arterial chemoembolization  
*Lee SW, Peng YC, Lien HC, Ko CW, Tung CF, Chang CS*
- 7285 Intervention effect of encouraging mental and programmed nursing of patients in interventional operating room on their compliance and bad moods  
*Chi RB, Cai YY, Mao HP*

- 7293** Preoperative neoadjuvant chemotherapy in patients with breast cancer evaluated using strain ultrasonic elastography  
*Pan HY, Zhang Q, Wu WJ, Li X*
- 7302** Risk factors for delayed intracranial hemorrhage secondary to ventriculoperitoneal shunt: A retrospective study  
*Chen JC, Duan SX, Xue ZB, Yang SY, Li Y, Lai RL, Tan DH*
- 7314** Sequential treatment of severe pneumonia with respiratory failure and its influence on respiratory mechanical parameters and hemodynamics  
*Niu BY, Wang G, Li B, Zhen GS, Weng YB*
- 7324** Effects of alendronate sodium combined with InterTan on osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures and fracture recurrence  
*Wang KM, Wei SP, Yin XY, Meng QJ, Kong YM*
- 7333** Correlation of magnetic resonance imaging quantitative parameters and apparent diffusion coefficient value with pathological breast cancer  
*Wang Z, Ren GY, Yin Q, Wang Q*
- 7341** Risk factors for delirium after surgery for craniocerebral injury in the neurosurgical intensive care unit  
*Chen RY, Zhong CH, Chen W, Lin M, Feng CF, Chen CN*

**Observational Study**

- 7348** Effect of osteoarthritic knee flexion deformity correction by total knee arthroplasty on sagittal spinopelvic alignment in Indian population  
*Puthiyapura LK, Jain M, Tripathy SK, Puliappadamb HM*
- 7356** Imaging characteristics of orbital peripheral nerve sheath tumors: Analysis of 34 cases  
*Dai M, Wang T, Wang JM, Fang LP, Zhao Y, Thakur A, Wang D*

**Randomized Controlled Trial**

- 7365** Comparison of involved-field intensity-modulated radiotherapy combined with S-1 *vs* radiotherapy alone for elderly patients with esophageal cancer  
*Liu LH, Yan MH, Di YP, Fu ZG, Zhang XD, Li HQ*

**Randomized Clinical Trial**

- 7376** Dexmedetomidine in pediatric unilateral internal inguinal ring ligation  
*Liu G, Zhang L, Wang HS, Lin Y, Jin HQ, Wang XD, Qiao WN, Zhang YT, Sun JQ, Liu ZN*

**META-ANALYSIS**

- 7386** Impact of cancer on mortality rates in patients with sepsis: A meta-analysis and meta-regression of current studies  
*Xiang MJ, Chen GL*

## CASE REPORT

- 7397 Updated clinical and glycomic features of mannosyl-oligosaccharide glucosidase deficiency: Two case reports  
*Abuduxikuer K, Wang L, Zou L, Cao CY, Yu L, Guo HM, Liang XM, Wang JS, Chen L*
- 7409 Solitary necrotic nodules of the liver with "ring"-like calcification: A case report  
*Bao JP, Tian H, Wang HC, Wang CC, Li B*
- 7415 Corticosteroid-induced bradycardia in multiple sclerosis and maturity-onset diabetes of the young due to hepatocyte nuclear factor 4- $\alpha$  mutation: A case report  
*Sohn SY, Kim SY, Joo IS*
- 7422 Essential thrombocythemia with non-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction as the first manifestation: A case report  
*Wang ZM, Chen WH, Wu YM, Wang LQ, Ye FL, Yin RL*
- 7429 Extranasopharyngeal angiofibroma in children: A case report  
*Yan YY, Lai C, Wu L, Fu Y*
- 7438 Deep Sylvian fissure meningiomas: A case report  
*Wang A, Zhang X, Sun KK, Li C, Song ZM, Sun T, Wang F*
- 7445 Acute pulmonary embolism originating from upper limb venous thrombosis following breast cancer surgery: Two case reports  
*Duan Y, Wang GL, Guo X, Yang LL, Tian FG*
- 7451 Managing spondylitis tuberculosis in a patient with underlying diabetes and hypothyroidism: A case report  
*Novita BD, Muliono AC, Wijaya S, Theodora I, Tjahjono Y, Supit VD, Willianto VM*
- 7459 Ovarian mucinous tumor with mural nodules of anaplastic carcinoma: Three case reports  
*Wang XJ, Wang CY, Xi YF, Bu P, Wang P*
- 7467 Transcatheter arterial infusion chemotherapy and embolization for primary lacrimal sac squamous cell carcinoma: A case report  
*Sun MH, Yi WD, Shen L, Zhou L, Lu JX*
- 7474 Programmed cell death-1 inhibitor combination treatment for recurrent proficient mismatch repair/microsatellite-stable type endometrial cancer: A case report  
*Zhai CY, Yin LX, Han WD*
- 7483 Novel compound heterozygous mutation of *SLC12A3* in Gitelman syndrome co-existent with hyperthyroidism: A case report and literature review  
*Qin YZ, Liu YM, Wang Y, You C, Li LN, Zhou XY, Lv WM, Hong SH, Xiao LX*
- 7495 Successful treatment of hyperglycemia with liraglutide in a hospitalized 27-year-old patient with schizophrenia: A case report  
*Zhang L, Yu WJ, Zhu H, Li HF, Qiao J*

- 7502** Refractory lymphoma treated with chimeric antigen receptor T cells combined with programmed cell death-1 inhibitor: A case report  
*Zhang CJ, Zhang JY, Li LJ, Xu NW*
- 7509** Median arcuate ligament syndrome with retroperitoneal haemorrhage: A case report  
*Lu XC, Pei JG, Xie GH, Li YY, Han HM*
- 7517** Novel frameshift mutation in the *AHDC1* gene in a Chinese global developmental delay patient: A case report  
*Lin SZ, Xie HY, Qu YL, Gao W, Wang WQ, Li JY, Feng XC, Jin CQ*
- 7523** Selective nerve block for the treatment of neuralgia in Kummell's disease: A case report  
*Zhang X, Li ZX, Yin LJ, Chen H*
- 7531** Traditional Chinese medicine manipulative reduction combined with percutaneous vertebroplasty for treating type III Kummell's disease: A case report  
*Hao SS, Zhang RJ, Dong SL, Li HK, Liu S, Li RF, Ren HH, Zhang LY*
- 7539** Differential diagnosis and treatment of foot drop caused by an extraneural ganglion cyst above the knee: A case report  
*Won KH, Kang EY*
- 7545** Effect of hydrogen intervention on refractory wounds after radiotherapy: A case report  
*Zhao PX, Luo RL, Dang Z, Wang YB, Zhang XJ, Liu ZY, Wen XH, Liu MY, Zhang MZ, Adzavon YM, Ma XM*
- 7553** Chronic urticaria associated with lung adenocarcinoma — a paraneoplastic manifestation: A case report and literature review  
*Jiménez LF, Castellón EA, Marengo JD, Mejía JM, Rojas CA, Jiménez FT, Coronell L, Osorio-Llanes E, Mendoza-Torres E*
- 7565** Spinal giant cell-rich osteosarcoma-diagnostic dilemma and treatment strategy: A case report  
*Tseng CS, Wong CE, Huang CC, Hsu HH, Lee JS, Lee PH*
- 7571** Primary clear cell sarcoma of soft tissue in the posterior cervical spine invading the medulla oblongata: A case report  
*Liu CC, Huang WP, Gao JB*
- 7577** *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*-related effusive-constrictive pericarditis diagnosed with echocardiography: A case report  
*Chen JL, Mei DE, Yu CG, Zhao ZY*
- 7585** Maternal peripartum bacteremia caused by intrauterine infection with *Comamonas kerstersii*: A case report  
*Qu H, Zhao YH, Zhu WM, Liu L, Zhu M*
- 7592** Considerations of single-lung ventilation in neonatal thoracoscopic surgery with cardiac arrest caused by bilateral pneumothorax: A case report  
*Zhang X, Song HC, Wang KL, Ren YY*

- 7599** Rare primary rectal mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue lymphoma with curative resection by endoscopic submucosal dissection: A case report and review of literature

*Tao Y, Nan Q, Lei Z, Miao YL, Niu JK*

- 7609** Differences in examination results of small anastomotic fistula after radical gastrectomy with afterward treatments: A case report

*Lu CY, Liu YL, Liu KJ, Xu S, Yao HL, Li L, Guo ZS*

### **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

- 7617** Baseline differences may impact on relationship between dietary tryptophan and risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes

*Ren XH, Ye YW, He LP*

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Retrospective Study

# Effects of alendronate sodium combined with InterTan on osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures and fracture recurrence

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## Abstract

### BACKGROUND

Osteoporosis is a global disease affecting 6.6% of the total population. Osteoporosis complications include fractures, increased bone fragility, and reduced bone strength. The most commonly affected parts are the vertebral body, hip, and wrist.

### AIM

To examine the effect of alendronate sodium combined with InterTan for osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures on bone and fracture recurrence

### METHODS

In total, 126 cases of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures were selected and divided into two groups according to the 1:1 principle by the simple random method. They were admitted to the Department of Orthopedics, First Affiliated Hospital of Xingtai Medical College, from January 2018 to September 2020. The control group was treated with InterTan fixation combined with placebo, and the observation group with alendronate sodium based on InterTan fixation. Operation-related indicators, complications, and recurrent fractures were compared between the groups. Changes in bone metabolism markers, *t* value for hip bone mineral density, and Harris Hip Score were observed.

### RESULTS



Operation time, intraoperative blood loss, postoperative ambulation time, and complications were compared between the groups, and no significant difference was found. The fracture healing time was significantly shorter in the observation group than in the control group.  $\beta$ -Collagen-specific sequence ( $\beta$ -CTX) and total aminoterminal propeptide of type I procollagen (T-PINP) in the control group at 3 mo after operation were compared with those before operation, and the difference was not significant. Six months after the operation, the  $\beta$ -CTX level decreased and T-PINP level increased.  $\beta$ -CTX level at 3 and 6 mo in the observation group after operation was lower, and T-PINP level was higher, than that before operation. Compared with the control group, T-PINP level of the observation group was significantly higher and  $\beta$ -CTX level was significantly lower at 3 and 6 mo after operation. The  $t$  value of hip bone mineral density was compared in the control group before and 1 mo after operation, and significant difference was not found. Compared with the control group, the  $t$  value of hip bone mineral density in the observation group was significantly higher at 1, 3, 6, and 12 mo after operation. Compared with the control group, the Harris score of the observation group was significantly higher at 1, 3, 6, and 12 mo after operation. The recurrence rate of fractures in the observation group within 12 mo was 0.00%, which was significantly lower than 6.35% in the control group.

### CONCLUSION

Alendronate sodium combined with InterTan in the treatment of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures can increase bone mineral density, improve hip joint function, promote fracture healing, and reduce fracture recurrence.

**Key Words:** Alendronate sodium; InterTan treatment; Osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures; Bone mineral density; Hip joint function

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**Core Tip:** The osteoporotic intertrochanteric fracture is one of the most common complications of osteoporosis and requires surgical internal fixation. However, for patients with osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures, osteoporosis can affect the healing rate of fracture ends, with slow fracture healing and reduced exercise possibly aggravating osteoporosis and thereby leading to a vicious circle. Therefore, the treatment of osteoporosis should be strengthened during the treatment of osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures. In this study, we observed the effect of alendronate sodium combined with InterTan on osteoporosis and fracture recurrence in the treatment of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures and discussed its mechanism.

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## INTRODUCTION

InterTan is an intramedullary fixation, short lever arm force-based, anti-rotation, and stable clinical treatment of intertrochanteric fractures commonly used[1]. However, for patients with osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures, osteoporosis can affect the healing rate of fracture ends, with slow fracture healing and reduced exercise possibly aggravating osteoporosis and thereby leading to a vicious circle [2]. Therefore, the treatment of osteoporosis should be strengthened during the treatment of osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures.

Alendronate sodium is a third-generation diphosphonate drug of the amino-bisphosphonate bone metabolic regulator family, which can inhibit osteoclast activity and the bone resorption process and reduce bone destruction. It is often used in the treatment of osteoporosis and the prevention of compression fractures of the hip and vertebral body in clinical practice[3]. However, there are only few studies on its impact on long-term recurrence of fractures. In this study, we observed the effect of alendronate sodium combined with InterTan on osteoporosis and fracture recurrence in the treatment of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures and discussed its mechanism.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### General information

A total of 126 patients with osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures admitted to the Department of Orthopedics, the First Affiliated Hospital of Xingtai Medical College, from January 2018 to September 2020 were selected. The patients were divided into two groups according to the principle of 1:1 using the simple random method. The general characteristics of the two groups was not comparable ( $P > 0.05$ ) (Table 1).

The inclusion criteria were as follows: compliance with the standards of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures [unilateral femoral intertrochanteric fractures were diagnosed based on medical history, signs, and imaging findings and bone mineral density (BMD) showed femoral neck fracture ( $T \leq -2.50$  SD)];  $18 \leq \text{age} \leq 80$  years; initial fracture developed  $< 2$  wk; closed fracture; and patients provided informed consent. This study was conducted in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Conversely, the exclusion criteria were as follows: fractures caused by bone tumors and bone tuberculosis; combined fractures in other parts; allergic constitution; presence of other diseases affecting bone metabolism or use of drugs affecting bone metabolism; presence of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular, liver, kidney, and other serious diseases; uncontrollable hypertension and diabetes; and presence of mental illness.

### Method

The control group was treated with InterTan fixation. In brief, after successful anesthesia, the patient was placed in the supine position, and the affected limb was pulled and reset. Routine disinfection and towel laying were performed. A long incision of approximately 5 cm was made along the proximal end of the femoral greater trochanter. The deep fascia was opened, and the top of the femoral greater trochanter was bluntly separated and exposed. Then, a 2.5-mm S-wire was placed within the top exposed region. The S-wire was confirmed to be located in the medullary cavity using the C-arm X-ray machine. The sleeve was used to protect the proximal opening, remove the S-wire, place the guide needle, and place the intramedullary nail after marrow enlargement. The depth of intramedullary nailing was adjusted, and the anteversion angle was modified under C-arm fluoroscopy. Afterward, the guide length was measured, the lower anti-rotation blade was inserted, and guide length was re-measured. Tension screws were placed in the fracture space, followed by the distal locking screws, and the tail cap was twisted after determining the internal fixation position was proper. At the same time, placebo treatment, placebo appearance, administration time, and alendronate sodium administration were combined.

The observation group was treated with alendronate sodium based on the InterTan fixation: oral alendronate sodium tablets (Shiyao Group Ouyi Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd., specification: 70 mg, H20061303) 70 mg/wk.

### Observation indicators and detection methods

Operation-related indexes (operation time, intraoperative blood loss, postoperative ambulation time, and fracture healing time), complications (bedsore, urinary tract infection, pulmonary infection, incision infection, *etc.*), and recurrent fractures were compared between the two groups. The changes in bone metabolism marker levels, hip BMD  $t$  value, and Harris Hip Score (Harris) score were observed, with Harris scores of  $\geq 90$ , 80–89, 70–79, and  $< 70$  points considered excellent, good, fair, and poor, respectively[4].

Fasting peripheral venous blood samples of the patients were collected in an EDTA-K2 anticoagulant tube before operation, 3 mo after operation, and 6 mo after operation. The blood samples were centrifuged for 1 h at 4000 r/min for 10 min. The separated serum was used to detect  $\beta$ -collagen-specific sequence ( $\beta$ -CTX) and total type I procollagen amino-terminal propeptide (T-PINP) by an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay kit (Shanghai Enzyme-linked Biotechnology Co., Ltd.). The detection instrument used was RT-96 (Shenzhen Mindray Medical Electronics Co., Ltd.).

Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry was performed to detect the  $t$  value of BMD for the affected hip before operation and 1, 3, 6, and 12 mo after operation.

### Statistical analysis

The data were processed using SPSS19.0. The measurement indexes are described as mean  $\pm$  SD, and the  $t$  test was performed for comparison. The enumeration data are expressed as the number of cases (percentage), and the  $\chi^2$  test was performed for comparison. The statistical test level was set at 0.05.

**Table 1 Comparison of general information between the two groups, *n* (%)**

Material	Control group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	Observation group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	$\chi^2$	<i>P</i> value
Gender			0.519	0.471
Male	38 (60.32)	34 (53.97)		
Female	25 (39.68)	29 (46.03)		
Age (yr)			0.037	0.847
< 60	19 (30.16)	20 (31.75)		
≥ 60	44 (69.84)	43 (68.25)		
Affected side			0.286	0.593
Left	34 (53.97)	31 (49.21)		
Right	29 (46.03)	32 (50.79)		
AO typing			0.140	0.710
A2 type	42 (66.67)	40 (63.49)		
A3 type	21 (33.33)	23 (36.51)		
Cause of injury			1.685	0.640
Fall	21 (33.33)	26 (41.27)		
Traffic accident	23 (36.51)	18 (28.57)		
Fall from height	15 (23.81)	13 (20.63)		
Other	4 (6.35)	6 (9.52)		
Combined diseases				
Coronary heart disease	14 (22.22)	12 (19.05)	0.194	0.660
Diabetes	11 (17.46)	9 (14.29)	0.238	0.626
Hypertension	15 (23.81)	18 (28.57)	0.370	0.543
Hyperlipidemia	8 (12.70)	11 (17.46)	0.558	0.455

## RESULTS

### **Comparison of operation-related indicators between the two groups**

The operation time, blood loss, and postoperative ambulation time were compared between the two groups, and the difference was not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). Fracture healing time in the observation group was shorter than that in the control group; the difference was statistically significant ( $P < 0.05$ , Table 2).

### **Comparison between the two groups**

The complications such as bed sore, urinary tract infection, pulmonary infection, and incision infection were compared between the two groups, and the difference was not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ , Table 3).

### **Comparison of bone metabolism markers between the two groups**

Before surgery, the bone metabolic markers were compared between the two groups, and the difference was not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). The  $\beta$ -CTX and T-PINP were compared between before and 3 mo after operation in the control group, and the difference was not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). Six months after operation,  $\beta$ -CTX decreased and T-PINP increased compared with those before operation ( $P < 0.05$ ). The  $\beta$ -CTX at 3 and 6 mo after operation in the observation group was lower than that before operation, and the T-PINP was higher than that before operation ( $P < 0.05$ ). Compared with the control group, T-PINP was significantly higher and  $\beta$ -CTX was significantly lower in the observation group at 3 and 6 mo after operation ( $P < 0.05$ , Table 4).

### **Comparison of hip bone mineral density *t* value between the two groups**

Before operation, the *t* value of hip bone mineral density was compared between the two groups, and the difference was not statistically significant ( $P > 0.05$ ). The *t* value of hip bone mineral density was compared between 1 mo after operation and before operation in the control group, and the difference

**Table 2 Comparison of surgical indicators between the two groups (mean  $\pm$  SD)**

Groups	Operation time (min)	Intraoperative bleeding (mL)	Postoperative landing time (d)	Fracture healing time (mo)
Control group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	75.25 $\pm$ 5.96	52.36 $\pm$ 11.47	7.06 $\pm$ 1.85	3.35 $\pm$ 0.29
Observation group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	73.89 $\pm$ 6.08	51.74 $\pm$ 13.36	6.98 $\pm$ 1.91	3.04 $\pm$ 0.23
<i>t</i> value	1.268	0.279	0.239	6.648
<i>P</i> value	0.207	0.780	0.817	0.000

**Table 3 Comparison of co-occurrence between the two groups, *n* (%)**

Groups	Bedsore	Urinary tract infection	Pulmonary infection	Incision infection	Total complications
Control group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	1 (1.59)	1 (1.59)	2 (3.17)	1 (1.59)	5 (7.94)
Observation group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	1 (1.59)	1 (1.59)	1 (1.59)	0 (0.00)	3 (1.76)
<i>t</i> value					0.534
<i>P</i> value					0.465

**Table 4 Comparison of bone metabolism markers between the two groups (mean  $\pm$  SD)**

Groups	$\beta$ -CTX (ng/L)			T-PINP ( $\mu$ g/L)		
	Preoperative	3 mo after operation	12 mo after operation	Preoperative	3 mo after operation	12 mo after operation
Control group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	345.85 $\pm$ 85.23	321.25 $\pm$ 71.36	304.58 $\pm$ 68.45 <sup>a</sup>	21.45 $\pm$ 5.26	22.58 $\pm$ 6.04	25.89 $\pm$ 5.12 <sup>a</sup>
Observation group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	351.14 $\pm$ 79.92	261.25 $\pm$ 64.74 <sup>a</sup>	162.25 $\pm$ 51.33 <sup>a</sup>	21.37 $\pm$ 5.08	26.14 $\pm$ 4.86 <sup>a</sup>	29.85 $\pm$ 4.75 <sup>a</sup>
<i>t</i> value	0.359	4.943	13.204	0.087	3.645	4.500
<i>P</i> value	0.720	0.000	0.000	0.931	0.000	0.000

<sup>a</sup>*P* < 0.05 *vs* before operation. $\beta$ -CTX:  $\beta$ -Collagen-specific sequence; T-PINP: Total aminoterminal propeptide of type I procollagen.

was not statistically significant (*P* > 0.05). The *t* values of hip bone mineral density at 3, 6, and 12 mo after operation were higher than those before operation (*P* < 0.05). The *t* values of hip bone mineral density in the observation group at 1, 3, 6, and 12 mo after operation were higher than those before operation (*P* < 0.05). Compared with the control group, the *t* value of hip bone mineral density in the observation group was significantly higher at 1, 3, 6, and 12 mo after operation (*P* < 0.05, Table 5).

### Comparison of Harris scores between the two groups

Before operation, the Harris score was compared between the two groups, and the difference was not statistically significant (*P* > 0.05). The Harris scores of the two groups at 1, 3, 6, and 12 mo after operation were higher than those before operation (*P* < 0.05). Compared with that of the control group, the Harris score of the observation group was significantly higher at 1, 3, 6, and 12 mo after operation (*P* < 0.05, Table 6).

### Comparison of recurrence of fractures in the two groups within 12 mo

The recurrence rate of fracture within 12 mo in the observation group was 0.00%, which was significantly lower than 6.35% in the control group, and the difference was statistically significant (*P* < 0.05, Table 7).

## DISCUSSION

In recent years, with the advent of the aging society, the incidence of osteoporosis and osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fracture has been increasing. It is expected that by 2050, the incidence of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures may be as high as 6 million, which poses a certain

**Table 5 Comparison of *t*-values of hip bone mineral density between the two groups (mean  $\pm$  SD)**

Groups	Preoperative	After operation			
		1 mo	3 mo	6 mo	12 mo
Control group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	-2.61 $\pm$ 0.18	-2.55 $\pm$ 0.19	-2.53 $\pm$ 0.17 <sup>a</sup>	-2.34 $\pm$ 0.16 <sup>a</sup>	-2.08 $\pm$ 0.13 <sup>a</sup>
Observation group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	-2.60 $\pm$ 0.15	-2.21 $\pm$ 0.22 <sup>a</sup>	-2.02 $\pm$ 0.15 <sup>a</sup>	-1.61 $\pm$ 0.11 <sup>a</sup>	-1.37 $\pm$ 0.10 <sup>a</sup>
<i>t</i> value	0.339	9.284	17.855	29.842	34.360
<i>P</i> value	0.735	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

<sup>a</sup>*P* < 0.05 *vs* before operation.**Table 6 Comparison of Harris scores between the two groups (mean  $\pm$  SD)**

Groups	Preoperative	After operation			
		1 mo	3 mo	6 mo	12 mo
Control group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	34.25 $\pm$ 3.05	71.14 $\pm$ 4.06 <sup>a</sup>	78.65 $\pm$ 3.58 <sup>a</sup>	81.05 $\pm$ 4.06 <sup>a</sup>	83.36 $\pm$ 3.64 <sup>a</sup>
Observation group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	34.18 $\pm$ 3.21	79.53 $\pm$ 4.51 <sup>a</sup>	86.54 $\pm$ 4.12 <sup>a</sup>	88.96 $\pm$ 4.11 <sup>a</sup>	91.23 $\pm$ 4.52 <sup>a</sup>
<i>t</i> value	0.125	10.974	11.474	10.868	10.764
<i>P</i> value	0.900	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

<sup>a</sup>*P* < 0.05 *vs* before operation.**Table 7 Comparison of recurrence of fractures in the two groups within 12 mo, *n* (%)**

Groups	Recurrent fracture
Control group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	4 (6.35)
Observation group ( <i>n</i> = 63)	0 (0.00)
$\chi^2$	4.131
<i>P</i> value	0.042

burden on social medical resources[5]. Intertrochanteric fractures of the femur can cause severe pain and restrict lower extremity activities. For example, conservative treatment has problems such as long treatment times, several bedridden complications, serious infectious complications, lower extremity deep vein thrombosis, *etc.*, and even threatens the life safety of patients[6]. Therefore, it is suggested that surgical internal fixation should be the first choice of treatment for patients with intertrochanteric fractures to obtain a solid internal fixation effect, promote fracture healing, and accelerate rehabilitation. However, when osteoporosis is severe, the risk of nail withdrawal and breakage after internal fixation increases, leading to surgical failure[7]. Therefore, the treatment of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures is more difficult.

InterTan is a new type of proximal femoral nail material specifically used for intertrochanteric fractures. The cross-section of the main nail is trapezoidal, which has stronger anti-rotation ability. The valgus angle of the main nail is 4°, which is more in line with the physiological and anatomical characteristics of the Asian femur. The head and neck screws are designed as tension screws and compression screws, which interlock and play a good compression effect on the fracture end and increase its anti-rotation ability and stability. The good matching of the medullary cavity increases the anatomical compatibility of the main nail with the mechanical requirements to obtain optimal stability, reduce the risk of internal fixation fracture, and help patients step out of bed early and perform rehabilitation training, which is conducive to fracture healing[8]. Hiragami *et al*[9] used InterTan static fixation assisted by Calqi D in the treatment of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures, and found that it can promote fracture healing and improve the functional recovery of lower extremities. Polat *et al*[10] found that the internal fixation effect of InterTan in the treatment of elderly femoral intertrochanteric fractures is stronger than that of PFNA-II, which is conducive to maintaining a suitable fracture-to-apex distance, and has better anti-cutting and subsidence effects. It has been found that the internal fixation effect of InterTan in the treatment of intertrochanteric femoral fractures in the elderly is stronger than that of

PFNA-II, which is beneficial for maintaining the appropriate fracture to the apex distance, with better anti-cutting and settlement effects.

Actively correcting the osteoporosis status of patients promotes the postoperative rehabilitation of patients with osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures. Alendronate sodium is a commonly used anti-osteoporosis drug. It is widely used in the treatment of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women. Zhao *et al* [11] applied sodium alendronate in the treatment of diabetic osteoporosis patients and found that it effectively relieved osteoporosis symptoms and improved bone metabolism. Sodium alendronate has a strong affinity for hydroxyapatite, which can inhibit osteoclast activity and bone resorption, without an inhibitory effect on bone mineralization [12,13]. Some scholars used alendronate tablets combined with calcitonin for postoperative bone pain in patients with osteoporotic fracture and reported a good mitigation effect [14,15]. The present study found that alendronate sodium combined with InterTan in the treatment of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures can shorten the fracture healing time and improve postoperative 1-, 3-, 6-, and 12-mo hip BMD *t* value and Harris score. The findings suggest that alendronate sodium combined with InterTan in the treatment of osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures can improve BMD, improve hip function, and promote fracture healing and has a good curative effect. However, there was no significant effect on operation time, intraoperative blood loss, postoperative ambulation time, and complications. Alendronate sodium can inhibit fracture processes, improve the degree of bone mineralization, increase the thickness of the bone cortex and BMD, promote fracture healing and early ambulation, and improve hip function.

Abnormal bone metabolism and a bone formation rate lower than the bone destruction rate are crucial mechanisms for osteoporosis; thus, fractures are associated with difficult healing [16]. T-PINP is a type I collagen deposition indicator related to bone tissue and a commonly used bone formation marker in the clinical setting [17].  $\beta$ -CTX is the C-terminal peptide fragment of the decomposition product of type I collagen in the bone matrix during bone metabolism, and its serum level can reflect the degree of bone decomposition to a certain extent [18-20]. In this study, the levels of T-PINP and  $\beta$ -CTX were detected before operation and 3 and 6 mo after operation. It was found that alendronate sodium combined with InterTan in the treatment of osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures could increase T-PINP level, reduce  $\beta$ -CTX level, and improve bone metabolism. Alendronate has a strong affinity with intrasosseous hydroxyapatite, which can inhibit osteoclast activity, resist bone resorption, and has no inhibitory effect on bone mineralization, which is one of its important mechanisms for promoting postoperative healing of fractures.

It was also found that alendronate sodium combined with InterTan in the treatment of osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures can reduce the risk of recurrent fractures within 12 mo after operation, with good long-term efficacy. This is related to the fact that alendronate sodium can better correct osteoporosis in patients.

## CONCLUSION

Alendronate sodium combined with InterTan in the treatment of osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures can improve BMD, improve hip function, promote fracture healing, and reduce fracture recurrence.

## ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

### Research background

It is estimated that 1.6 million patients develop wrist fractures worldwide due to osteoporosis.

### Research motivation

The osteoporotic intertrochanteric fracture is one of the most common complications of osteoporosis and requires surgical internal fixation.

### Research objectives

This study aimed to examine the effect of alendronate sodium combined with InterTan for osteoporotic femoral intertrochanteric fractures on bone and fracture recurrence

### Research methods

The control group was treated with InterTan fixation combined with placebo, and the observation group with alendronate sodium based on InterTan fixation.

### Research results

The fracture healing time was significantly shorter in the observation group than in the control group.



**Research conclusions**

Alendronate sodium combined with InterTan in the treatment of osteoporotic intertrochanteric fractures can reduce fracture recurrence.

**Research perspectives**

Osteoporosis is a significant public health concern in aging societies and can cause pain and fractures

**FOOTNOTES**

**Author contributions:** Wang KM designed this study; Wang KM and Wei SP wrote the manuscript; Wang KM, Wei SP, Yin XY, Meng QJ, and Kong YM were responsible for sorting the data; and all authors have read and approve the final manuscript.

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