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Low dose prednisone does not affect calcium homeostasis or bone density in postmenopausal women with rheumatoid arthritis.

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To assess whether low doses of prednisone produce generalized alterations in skeletal homeostasis in rheumatoid arthritis (RA), indices of calcium metabolism and bone mineral density (BMD) were measured in 22 women with RA treated without or with prednisone (6.6 mg daily). Ionized and total calcium concentrations, intact parathyroid hormone (PTH) and osteocalcin levels were comparable in the 2 groups. BMD measurements in the lumbar spine, and proximal femur sites including the femoral neck, Ward's triangle, and trochanteric region were not significantly different in patients with RA treated without or with prednisone. In our experience low dose prednisone did not adversely affect indices of mineral metabolism, or bone density in RA.

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