Reviewer's report

Title: Characteristics of patients initiating raloxifene compared to those initiating bisphosphonates

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Reviewer: E. Michael Lewiecki

Reviewer's report:

This is a straightforward retrospective cohort review of claims databases with predictable findings. It is well conducted with conclusions that are generally supported by the data. I question a few details that would be best to clarify:

1. In the conclusion of the abstract and text, it is stated that patients treated with raloxifene appear to have less severe osteoporosis than those treated with bisphosphonates. While this might well be true, it is not clear to me whether most patients in either group had a densitometric or clinical diagnosis of osteoporosis. If it is not know how many patients in each group had a WHO classification of osteoporosis, osteopenia, or normal, the authors should consider rephrasing this statement.

2. page 5, 1st paragraph- It is stated that 6.7% of patients treated with IV bisphosphonates develop osteonecrosis, and later it is said that most cases occur in cancer patients. However, it is not made clear that IV bisphosphonates used to treat osteoporosis appear to pose no greater risk for ONJ than oral bisphosphonates for osteoporosis. It might be best to state this clearly so as not to leave the reader with the impression that IV bisphosphonates for osteoporosis are a greater risk factor for ONJ than oral.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.