SKELETAL DYNAMICS IN MIAN MEASURED BY NONRADIOACTIVE STRONTIUM *

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A great deal of useful information about calcium metabolism in man has been obtained by balance technics. Balance studies give only net changes in total body calcium and do not indicate whether changes in balance result from alterations of rates of movement into or out of bone. For example, positive balance could result from increased bone deposition or decreased bone resorption. Similarly, balance could be unchanged if increased resorption were matched by increased deposition. Rates of bone deposition have been measured in man using $Ca⁴⁵$ and $Ca⁴⁷$ as tracers $(1-11)$. Isotopes of strontium have been similarly used $(5, 6, 8, 11-16)$, since strontium is a boneseeking element whose distribution in the body is similar to that of calcium. Accumulated experience suggests that cautious use of these boneseeking radionuclides in human subjects is without demonstrable risk. Nevertheless, this experience is still limited both in numbers of subjects and length of observation. In a study of Sr⁹⁰ toxicity in mice, a direct linear relationship was noted between total internal radiation dose from Sr⁹⁰ and decrease in survival time and tumor production (17). Even small doses of radiation may not be without danger, for this analysis showed no lower threshold.

A recently developed flame photometric method (18) for measurement of calcium was adapted to measure strontium. If stable strontium could be used as a tracer it would be valuable for safely studying various types of patients in statistically valid numbers and for repeated tests in the same individual under varied conditions. This possibility is the subject of the present investigation. The results indicate that nonradioactive strontium can be used to detect alterations of skeletal metabolism in various defined physiological and pathological states.

METHODS

The following subjects were studied: 25 healthy persons at ordinary activity (including 11 inmates of San Quentin Prison; 31 studies); 14 athletes (all members of the San Quentin Prison football team) ; 11 patients with idiopathic nephrolithiasis; 28 with primary hyperparathyroidism (4 with skeletal disease shown by elevated serum alkaline phosphatase levels or roentgenographic evidence of skeletal involvement or both; 17 with normal phosphatase and X-ray appearance but with microscopic foci of resorption seen in bone biopsy; and 7 with normal phosphatase, X-ray appearance and bone biopsy); 7 with hyperthyroidism; 8 with acromegaly; 3 with hyperadrenocorticism; 26 with advanced, unequivocal postmenopausal or senile osteoporosis (40 studies); ⁵ with Paget's disease of bone; and ¹ with chronic vitamin D overdose. The reproducibility of the method was tested by 21 duplicate tests in osteoporotic and normal subjects. All subjects were on diets free of milk and cheese except the prisoners, whose fare was unrestricted. All subjects were ambulatory.

Significant dietary strontium was excluded by checking initial blood and urine specimens. Then 10.0 mEq of strontium gluconate¹ was infused intravenously over a period of 10 minutes. Blood samples were taken every 24 hours and 24-hour urine specimens were collected for 4 to 6 days.

All specimens were collected in acid-washed glassware. All determinations were done in duplicate. Serum and urine calcium levels were determined on a flame spectrophotometer by the method of Maclntyre (18). Serum strontium was measured by diluting 1.0 ml of serum with 3 ml of an aqueous solution of 3 per cent perchloric acid and 0.5 mM monopotassium phosphate. The supernatant was read at 461 m μ in the flame spectrophotometer between standards in a 0.25 dilution of serum containing concentrations of sodium, potassium, and calcium which

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FIG. 1. MODEL FOR ANALYSIS OF SKELETAL DYNAMICS.

are in the plateau area of their effect in enhancing strontium emission (19). Complete recovery of urinary strontium required co-precipitation with calcium as follows. Three ml of saturated ammonium oxalate was added to ¹⁵ to ³⁰ ml of urine, pH was adjusted to between 5.5 and 6.0; then 0.25 ml of 10 per cent calcium gluconate was added and the urine heated in a boiling water bath for a few minutes until the precipitate became flocculent. The urine was cooled at 4° C for ² or more hours, then centrifuged at 2,500 rpm for 10 minutes. After the supernatant was decanted, the precipitate was dissolved in 5.0 ml of ² N hydrochloric acid and made up to ^a total volume of 15.0 ml with distilled water. This solution was analyzed in the flame spectrophotometer, always by

TABLE ^I

Strontium/calcium observed ratios between serum and body tissues and fluids after intravenous infusion of strontium gluconate

	Time after infusion	Source	$\frac{\rm Sr}{\rm Ca}$ source $\sqrt{\frac{\rm Sr}{\rm Ca}}$ serum
hrs	min		
	$\frac{5}{5}$	Ascitic fluid	0.99
9 9 9		Ascitic fluid	0.89
		Ascitic fluid	0.97
20	30	Ascitic ffuid	0.94
21	0	Ascitic fluid	0.90
22	45	Ascitic fluid	0.82
22	45	Ascitic fluid	0.94
22	45	Ascitic fluid	0.84
32	15	Ascitic fluid	0.73
32	15	Ascitic fluid	0.81
32	15	Ascitic fluid	1.02
40	0	Spinal fluid	1.04
	20	Gall bladder	0.47
	20	Breast fat	0.48
	35	Rectus abdominis	0.44
	0	Strap muscle	0.49
444 45 14	35	Strap muscle	0.60
20	0	Strap muscle	0.45

reading between adjacent standards. When this precipitation technic was checked with radioactive strontium tracer, recovery varied from 97 to 101 per cent.

Analysis of data. The model for analysis of calcium movement is similar to that proposed by others (4, 7, 14, 15). This model (Figure 1) is based on studies which suggest that body calcium is divided into two pools (1, 3, 20-22). One is a very small pool of rapidly exchangeable calcium in the extracellular fluid, soft tissues, and surface crystal of bone. The other is a very large pool of less readily available calcium in the deeper layers of bone. Calcium is added to the exchangeable pool by intestinal absorption and bone resorption. It leaves the exchangeable pool by excretion and bone deposition. Thus, if one can introduce a tracer into the exchangeable pool and then measure the rate of loss of tracer from the pool and the rate of excretion, one can calculate the rate of bone deposition as the difference between the two. Such analysis can be done by using the usual formulas for measuring pool size and pool turnover rates. The calculations shown require the assumptions that there be no change in pool size, that mixing in the exchangeable pool is complete (or almost so) at the time that observations used for the calculations are made, that there is no continuing concentration (sequestration) of tracer in tissues other than bone during the period of observation, and that there is no return of tracer to the pool from bone.

Important alterations in the size of the exchangeable pool are not likely in 4 to 6 days and could not occur imperceptibly because such an alteration requires excessive diuresis or loss of soft tissue or skeleton. (No such fluctuation in body weight, urine volume, or urinary calcium excretion occurred during these studies.) That mixing of strontium through the various compartments of the exchangeable pool actually occurs within 24 hours after injection was tested in a few patients by comparing Sr to Ca ratios of available fluids and tissues with Sr to

Ca ratio of serum at varying time intervals after injection (Table I). These figures confirm that intravenously injected strontium is largely equilibrated through body fluids and soft tissues by 24 hours, as is calcium (20, 23-25). The slightly longer mixing time indicated by the serum curves suggests that skeletal equilibration is a little slower. This is borne out by external counting over soft tissue and bone (8). After distribution of intravenously injected calcium and strontium, most of the retained dose moves into the skeleton, and there is no continued accumulation in other tissues (8, 23, 26, 27). Continued concentration of tracer in tissue other than bone would add an additional route of tracer loss from the pool. The studies of Heaney and Whedon (7) indicate that in most subjects tracer does not re-enter the pool until 6 to 8 days after its injection, and it may be assumed that bone growth and bone resorption do not occur simultaneously in the same sites. Hence the major assumptions for the analysis seem reasonable. Accordingly, serum strontium concentrations were plotted as in Figure 2 and the following calculations were made:

$$
k = 0.693/t_{\frac{1}{2}}
$$
 [1]

where $k =$ fractional rate constant and $t_i =$ "halftime" derived by plotting serum specific activities.

$$
E = D/s_0 \tag{2}
$$

where $E =$ exchangeable pool (volume of strontium distribution), $D =$ corrected dose of tracer and $s_0 =$ serum specific activity at time zero.

$$
T = kE \tag{3}
$$

where $T =$ total turnover rate.

$$
U = \int_{t_1}^{t_2} dU \, s_0 \int_{t_1}^{t_2} e^{-kt} dt = (U_{t_2-t_1}) k / (s_{t_1} - s_{t_2}) \quad [4]
$$

where $U =$ urinary excretion rate, $U_{t_2 - t_1} =$ urinary content of tracer between time ¹ and time 2 (usually the interval from 24 to 120 hours) and s_{t_1} , s_{t_2} = serum strontium concentration at time ¹ and time 2.

$$
B = T - U \tag{5}
$$

where $B =$ rate of bone deposition.

During the 24 hours required for mixing, the strontium concentration in some parts of the pool will be greater than in others. Since the high concentration areas include blood, renal excretion will be temporarily enhanced. The excess excretion due to this inequality in distribution during mixing can be corrected by subtracting theoretical from actual urinary strontium measured during this interval. The theoretical urinary excretion during the mixing period was calculated from Equation 4 by letting t_1 and t_2 be the times at the beginning and end of mixing. The amount of excess excreted was usually 5 to 15 per cent of the dose. The injected dose was corrected for this amount in calculation of pool size. Examination of serum strontium curves indicated 24 hours as an average mixing time, with individual variations between 20 and 30 hours. The error introduced by using the initial 24 hours as a standard mixing time is small, since the steep portion of the mixing curve was always included in the correction.

To make the method widely applicable clinically, two routes of tracer excretion were not usually measuredsweat and feces. While some authors (28, 29) have suggested that sweat is normally an important route of calcium loss, our measurements of sweat calcium and strontium concentrations during physical exercise (Table II) showed that even at maximal rates, sweat accounted for only a small portion of calcium or strontium loss. The sweat glands, like the intestine and kidney, discriminate against strontium. Fecal losses were not measured

NORMAL

EIS AGE 30

S₀ . 0.174

S₅ . 0.174

URINE SR DAY 0-1 . 1.6

URINE SR DAY 0-1 . 1.6

URINE SR DAY 0-1 . 1.6

S₄ . 0.056 0.40 **NORMAL** HYPERPARATHYROID **AGE 30** AGE 20 $5, 0.159$
 $S_1 = 0.125$

URINE SR DAY 0-1 = 1.790

URINE SR DAY 0-1 = 1.790

URINE SR DAY 0-1 = 1.790

UP TO LIDAY

UP TO LIDAY
 $,0.222$ 0.20 0.174 * S $_{o}^{\star}$ + 0.159 '5,"'0.156 $\frac{1}{5}$ S₁ = 0.125
5, * 0.106 URINE SR DAY 0-1 = 1.630 mEq
URINE SR DAYS 1-4 = 1.690 mi 0.10 URINE SR DAY 0-1 = 1.790 mEq
URINE SR DAYS 1-4 = 1.610 mEq SERUM 0.06 RONTIUM mEq/L 0.06 0.04 41.91 E+57.4L t/2+1.7/i I * * . 352 7 23.21/DAY * '.40\$ 7 = 14.8 L/DAY
U = 5.0 L/DAY 0.02 $.352$ (1.690), 5.04 **9.8L/DAY** _U': 7.0 LIDAY a.4405(6/0)s ⁷⁰ 8z/6.21/OAY .093 بر₀₋₁" <u>= 5.04 (222 - 156)</u> .
352 .0.945
13.52 -0.945) .9.315 SC1O; 70(159- /06) 0 9l .405
D_C + /0,000 - (1.790 - 0.9/8) + 9. 128 $-(1630 - 0.945) \cdot 9.3/5$ 0.01 _ ¹ 2 3 4 S 6 \circ ¹ 2 3 4 5 6 **DAYS DAYS**

FIG. 2. REPRESENTATIVE PLOTS OF SERUM STRONTIUM CONCENTRATIONS AND CALCULATIONS OF SKELETAL DYNAMICS IN A NORMAL AND A HYPERPARATHYROID SUBJECT.

TABLE II Sweat calcium and strontium content

			Serum		Sweat					
Name	Period*	Ca	Sr	Sr/Ca	Ca	Sr	Sr/Ca			
			mEq/L	mEq/L						
EIS	$\frac{1}{2}$	5.40	0.243 0.235	0.045	1.86 1.24	0.103 0.114	0.055 0.092			
		5.65	0.216	0.038	1.78	0.089	0.050			
WHI	$\frac{1}{2}$	5.65	0.216 0.206	0.038	1.75 1.44	0.085 0.063	0.049 0.044			
		6.10	0.197	0.032	183	0.071	0.039			
LUB	$\frac{1}{2}$	5.35	0.215 0.197	0.040	1.92 0.99	0.110 0.085	0.057 0.086			
		6.10	0.178	0.029	1.48	0.105	0.071			

* Periods 1, 2, and 3 are three consecutive 30-minute periods com-
mencing 16 hours after infusion of strontium and during which sub-
jects exercised. Sweat was collected on covered patches of ash-free
filter paper from pr

in our routine studies. Harrison, Raymond and Tretheway (12) reported 5-day cumulative fecal excretion of 3 per cent of an intravenous dose of strontium. Spencer and her co-workers (13). reported approximately 9 per cent in 6 days (1 patient) and from 8 to 17 per cent in 12 days (7 patients) (30), and concluded that the major route of excretion is through the kidney. Dow and Stanbury (11) found from 2.5 to 19 per cent fecal excretion of Sr⁸⁵ in 6 days in various disease states. Fraser, Harrison and Ibbertson (15) found that fecal excretion of intravenously injected stable strontium is 8 to 16 per cent of the administered dose in 6 days in the absence of diarrhea or steatorrhea. Calculation of the portion of pool lost daily through fecal excretion by our subjects based on the published range of values for fecal excretion shows

that bone deposition is overestimated by 9 to 16 per cent in all groups by ignoring fecal excretion. This discrepancy does not appear to affect comparison between our groups but will affect, by this amount, comparison with data in which fecal excretion has been measured.

RESULTS

The size of the exchangeable strontium pool in 25 healthy subjects at ordinary activity was 42.7 L, of which 30.9 per cent was turning over daily (Table III).² Urinary excretion from the pool as measured by strontium was 3.9 L per 24 hours, and the rate of deposition in bone was 9.6 L per 24 hours. In 11 patients with a history of urinary tract stones but without hypercalcemia, the pool size was comparable to that of the control subjects, but more mineral went to urine and less to bone. In the 14 athletes the pool was larger, and 35.7 per cent was turning over daily. The rates of urinary excretion and deposition in bone were 50 per cent greater than in healthy people at normal activity.

Hyperparathyroidism with X-ray or phosphatase evidence of osteitis also enlarged the pool, and both urinary excretion and bone deposition were increased. When only microscopic evidence of osteitis could be found the pool was only very

² The individual data from which Table III has been compiled appear in Tables ^I through IX in the Appendix.

TABLE III Strontium dynamics in various conditions *

Condition	No. of studies	No. of subjects	\boldsymbol{k}	E	T	U	\boldsymbol{B}
				L	$L/24$ hrs	$L/24$ hrs	$L/24$ hrs
Healthy; ordinary activity	31	25	0.309 ± 0.010	42.7 ± 1.1	13.5 ± 0.6	3.9 ± 0.2	9.6 ± 0.4
Athletes	14	14	$0.357 + 0.014$	56.9 ± 2.3	20.7 ± 1.0	5.8 ± 0.2	15.0 ± 1.0
Nephrolithiasis	11	11	0.340 ± 0.017	39.3 ± 2.3	13.3 ± 0.9	5.7 ± 0.8	7.6 ± 0.6
Hyperparathyroidism:							
with X-ray osteitis or	4 ₁	4	0.407	64.4	26.2	7.3	18.9
increased alk. phosphatase;			$(0.269 - 0.517)$	$(50.8 - 73.7)$	$(18.4 - 33.6)$	$(4.7 - 8.8)$	$(12.8 - 24.8)$
normal X-ray appearance and	18	17	0.396 ± 0.025	49.1 ± 2.8	18.5 ± 0.8	6.9 ± 0.5	11.5 ± 0.6
alk. phosphatase, microscopic osteitis on iliac crest biopsy:							
no evidence of osteitis by	7	7	0.309 ± 0.023	38.8 ± 3.2	11.8 ± 1.1	4.3 ± 0.5	7.5 ± 0.9
X-ray exam., phosphatase, or bone biopsy							
Hyperthyroidism	$\overline{\imath}$	7	0.475 ± 0.051	48.9 ± 3.6	23.8 ± 3.5	7.0 ± 2.2	16.7 ± 2.0
Acromegaly	9	я	0.332 ± 0.022	73.8 ± 6.2	23.7 ± 2.6	5.7 ± 0.5	18.2 ± 2.3
Osteoporosis, postmenopausal	40	26	0.263 ± 0.007	33.0 ± 0.9	8.7 ± 0.3	2.3 ± 0.2	6.4 ± 0.3
Adrenocortical hyperplasia	2‡	$\mathbf{2}$	$0.413 - 0.537$	$19.8 - 28.2$	$8.2 - 15.2$	$5.8 - 8.6$	$2.4 - 6.6$
Paget's disease	5 [†]	5	0.508 $(0.336 - 1.040)$	95.4 $(41.5 - 175.5)$	58.7 $(16.4 - 182.5)$	4.7 $(2.3 - 6.8)$	54.0 $(14.1 - 175.7)$
Chronic vitamin D overdose	$\mathbf{1}$		0.330	376.0	124	0.5	123.5

* k = Serum disappearance rate constant, E = exchangeable pool, T = total turnover, U = urinary excretion, B = bone deposition. Values are

t Mean and range.

t Mean and range.

t Individual values of 2 subjects

Patients	Status	Serum Ca	\boldsymbol{k}	E	\boldsymbol{T}	\boldsymbol{U}	\boldsymbol{B}
		mEq/L		L	$L/24$ hrs	$L/24$ hrs	$L/24$ hrs
NOR	Pre-op.	7.00	0.359	49.9	17.9	6.3	11.6
	4 days post-op.	4.85	0.328	51.0	16.7	5.9	10.8
POL	Pre-op.	7.35	0.502	58.2	29.2	10.0	19.2
	3 mos after 1st test	7.05	0.405	57.4	23.2	7.0	16.2
	1 week post-op.	5.26	0.563	43.2	24.3	2.8	21.5
TUR	Pre-op.	6.15	0.389	43.4	16.9	5.8	11.1
	9 mos post-op.	5.55	0.269	46.0	12.4	2.9	9.5
LAM	Pre-op.	6.10	0.359	31.7	11.4	5.5	5.9
	14 mos post-op.	5.50	0.225	44.4	10.0	2.6	7.4
SWE	Pre-op.	7.30	0.245	35.8	8.8	2.7	6.1
	2 mos post-op.	4.75	0.213	35.7	7.6	0.7	6.9
	8 mos post-op.	5.20	0.259	29.3	7.6	1.4	6.2

TABLE IV Strontium dynamics, before and after cure of hyperparathyroidism *

* For abbreviations, see Table III.

slightly enlarged, and there was a similar small increase in bone deposition rate $(p < 0.01)$. When even the histological appearance of the bone biopsy specimen was normal, the exchangeable pool size and urinary excretion were normal and the bone deposition rate tended to be low. In five patients without clinical evidence of osteitis fibrosa, cure of hyperparathyroidism did not change bone deposition rates, but urinary excretion rates fell in four and exchangeable pool size decreased in two (Table IV).

Calcium dynamics in the four conditions associated with osteopenia differed widely. In senile osteoporosis the mean values for exchangeable pool size and bone deposition rate were significantly less $(-23 \text{ and } -33 \text{ per cent, respectively})$ than in the normal group, although there was some overlap (Figure 3). After correction for body weight or surface area, exchangeable pool and bone deposition rates were still significantly lower in osteoporotics than in normal subjects (Table V). The two patients with osteoporosis due to long-standing Cushing's disease (bilateral adrenal cortical hyperplasia) had the smallest miscible pools in the series. A large portion of the pool was excreted daily by the kidney and only a small portion was deposited in bone. A third patient with Cushing's syndrome (adrenal cortical adenoma) of 15 months' duration had moderate skeletal demineralization but no fractures. Her miscible pool was normal but the rate of urinary excretion was greatly increased and the bone depo-

sition rate was a little above normal (Appendix Table VIII). After removal of the adrenal cortical adenoma, the urinary excretion rate was normal and bone deposition increased slightly.

In contrast to the osteoporosis of Cushing's disease and old age, hyperthyroidism and acromegaly both enlarged the exchangeable pool. In patients with hyperthyroidism the fraction of the pool turning over was also greater, but in the nine acromegalics it was the same as in the controls. Hyperthyroidism without hypercalcemia increased bone deposition without increasing urinary excretion. With hypercalcemia and normal renal function, bone deposition was increased and urinary excretion greatly augmented. In acromegalics the mineral went rapidly to bone and the urinary excretion rate was only slightly accelerated. No difference was found between the data of four

FIG. 3. FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION CURVES FOR EX-CHANGEABLE POOL SIZE AND BONE DEPOSITION RATES OF NORMAL SUBJECTS AND PATIENTS WITH POSTMENOPAUSAL OSTEOPOROSIS.

Condition	E		U	B
Body wt*				
Normals, average activity	0.602 ± 0.023	0.196 ± 0.010	0.055 ± 0.004	0.140 ± 0.007
Normal athletes	0.758 ± 0.029	0.278 ± 0.014	0.077 ± 0.004	0.206 ± 0.014
Osteoporotics	0.542 ± 0.016	0.149 ± 0.007	0.041 ± 0.003	0.108 ± 0.006
Body sizet				
Normals, average activity	23.2 ± 0.7	7.5 ± 0.3	2.1 ± 0.2	5.4 ± 0.2
Normal athletes	29.8 ± 1.2	10.9 ± 0.6	3.0 ± 0.1	7.9 ± 0.5
Osteoporotics	20.1 ± 0.6	5.6 ± 0.3	1.5 ± 0.1	4.0 ± 0.2

TABLE V

Effect of body size and weight on strontium dynamics

* Measurements of T, U and B are given as L/kg body weight/24 hrs; E is in L/kg.

 \dagger Measurements of T, U and B are given as L/m² BSA/24 hrs; E is in L/m².

acromegalics with roentgenographic evidence of osteoporosis and five without. In patients with Paget's disease of bone, the exchangeable pool and bone deposition rate were increased. The massive calcium deposits in one patient with chronic vitamin D overdosage increased the exchangeable pool almost tenfold; serum strontium values declined too rapidly to permit accurate measurement of bone deposition rate.

The reproducibility of the method is shown in Figure 4 where the results of a first test are plotted against a second test 21 times. For most sub-

FIG. 4. REPRODUCIBILITY OF SKELETAL DYNAMICS MEASURED BY STABLE STRONTIUM. Duplicate (and occasionally triplicate) tests were performed 16 times in osteoporotic patients (dots) and in 5 normal subjects (circled dots). First results are plotted on abscissa and second (and third) tests on ordinate.

jects the values cluster fairly close to the theoretical slope of unity with a mean variation of 8 per cent.

DISCUSSION

the two elements (11). Most of an injected dose The data indicate that strontium can be used as a tracer to detect alterations in skeletal metabolism. In order to relate changes in bone deposition of strontium to those of calcium, any major difference in their metabolism must be accounted for. Major differences do occur in absorption and excretion and there are minor differences in distribution. The intestine discriminates greatly against orally administered strontium (30) but fecal losses of intravenously injected $Ca⁴⁵$ and $Sr⁸⁵$ are not widely divergent (11, 30). Renal clearance of strontium is three to five times that of calcium (12) and renal discrimination appears responsible for the difference in total retention of the two elements when they are given intravenously. Skeletal accumulation of radioactive Ca and Sr was equal in rabbits whose kidneys had been poisoned with mercuric chloride (31) and in nephrectomized rats (32). The distribution of strontium is quite similar to that of calcium. Double tracer experiments in man with Ca^{45} and Sr^{85} gave similar "pool" sizes and disappearance rate constants for of either element is deposited in bone (23, 26, 27, 33), and radioactive isotopes of the two elements produce the same radioautographic patterns in bone (27, 34). Their passage from blood into extracellular fluid and spinal fluid are the same (24, 25), but intracellular penetration of strontium appears limited (Table I). Differences in protein binding of strontium and calcium have

been reported for man (35) but not for the rat (36).

Many studies suggest that bone discriminates but little between calcium and strontium *in vivo*. From a study in which Sr^{87} and Ca^{45} were given orally, it was inferred that in man the ratio of Sr⁸⁷ to $Ca⁴⁵$ was the same in bone and blood (37) . Changes in Sr metabolism paralleled those for Ca in various diseases affecting skeletal metabolism (5, 11). When differences in urinary excretion were taken into account, Sr⁹⁰ and Ca⁴⁵ had no marked difference in bone deposition rates after their simultaneous administration to rats (38). Their skeletal accumulation is the same in anuric animals (31, 32) and in short-term experiments in intact animals (36). The two are also taken up to almost the same extent *in vitro* by surviving embryonic chick bone (39), bone powder (31) and synthetic apatite crystals (36). Equimolar exchange of strontium for the calcium of bone crystal has been shown (40). However, bone does not appear to handle the two elements identically in all respects. Preferential release of strontium from bone has been noted both in vivo $(32, 12)$ 36) and in vitro (36, 39, 41, 42). In the present method gastrointestinal discrimination was minimized by administering the strontium intravenously, and differences in renal excretion were accounted for by direct measurement of the urinary strontium excretion rate. Since the major differences in their metabolism are accounted for, the calculated bone deposition rates for strontium probably closely reflect those of calcium. Although the present method overestimates the deposition rates by approximately 12 per cent because fecal excretion is not subtracted, changes in skeletal metabolism in the conditions studied are similar to those found when radiocalcium was used as a tracer.

The ¹⁰ mEq dose of strontium used in these studies is larger than usual tracer doses but was the minimal quantity that produced serum levels that could be accurately measured by flame spectrophotometry for 4 to 6 days after injection. Fraser and his associates (15) studied the problem of whether such large doses act as a true tracer by repeating tests at several dosage levels in the same subjects. They found no effect of varying the amount of strontium. Harrison and co-workers (12) have shown that renal clearance

of strontium is the same over a wide range of serum concentrations. The percentage of dose excreted in the feces appears to be in the same range when large doses of stable strontium and small doses of Sr^{85} (11, 12, 15, 30) are given.

The use of tracers to measure bone accretion rates or osteogenesis has been challenged because bone-seeking radioisotopes are concentrated in "hot spots," where new bone is being formed, and are deposited diffusely in dense, previously well mineralized bone (43-45). Hence, part of the tracer transferred from the pool to bone may be accounted for by new bone formation, and part by another process which has not been fully characterized. This process may represent a slow exchange, intracrystalline rearrangement, or diffuse accretion, and is included in the measurement of what is variously termed bone formation rate, accretion rate, and rate of osteogenesis. The extent to which this process affects the exponential disappearance of tracer from the rapidly exchangeable calcium pool is a matter of conjecture. While the diffuse label may not represent new bone growth, it does involve deposition of mineral ions which are important in maintaining the supporting function of the skeleton. For this reason, we have called the entire movement of tracer from the exchangeable pool to deeper layers of bone, the bone deposition rate.

Some authors have proposed correcting bone deposition rates for body weight. Since part of the exchangeable calcium is in extracellular fluid, it is possible that pool size is partly related to body size. To determine whether the smaller exchangeable pool of senile osteoporotics could result from their smaller size, we calculated the effect of correction for weight and surface area in these patients (Table V). The decreased pool size of osteoporosis is partly explained by the smaller size of the patients, but the difference in the rate of bone deposition between the controls and the osteoporotics was only slightly reduced by correcting the figures. Since weight and surface area of the athletes were the same as those of the control subjects at average activity, body size could not be responsible for the increased values seen in the athletes. Perhaps correction for lean body mass would be more appropriate. Fraser and his associates (15) expressed the volume of tracer distribution and rate of osteogenesis in "total body

plasma units." They calculated plasma volume as a constant fraction of body weight, so this unit is merely the volume of distribution corrected for body weight. Since plasma contains only part of the exchangeable pool and plasma volume is not known to affect calcium turnover, we have preferred to express the results in apparent liters of tracer distribution based on sampling the exchangeable pool via the serum.

It is difficult to correlate our results quantitatively with most reported studies of skeletal dynamics because of variation in experimental design, methods of calculation, and selection of patients. The study most comparable in experimental design is that of Fraser and co-workers (15) who used a similar model of calcium movement and nonradioactive strontium as a tracer. However, they employed a weight correction and expressed the results in "total plasma units." Their results may be recalculated to our terminology if the weight of each subject is known. Individual weights are given only for their normal subjects, who had exchangeable pools about 10 per cent lower and bone deposition rates approximately 30 per cent lower than ours. These discrepancies might be accounted for by the different method used to correct for loss of tracer during the mixing period and to integrate urine excretion rate. In making this correction for initial loss of tracer, Fraser and associates assumed that total body retention of strontium was linear on a semilogarithmic plot, but Norris, Tyler and Brues (46) have shown that total body retention of boneseeking elements is a linear function only when plotted on log-log coordinates. Nordin (9), using a modification of Fraser's method, reported data on seven normal subjects. He included data from the first 24 hours in plotting the rate of fall of urine specific activity over a 7-day period. Plots of serum concentration of bone-seeking tracers do not indicate first order rate processes until after 24 hours. Inclusion of these values from the first 24 hours, failure to correct for urinary loss of tracer during mixing, and the method of calculating fecal loss in this period operate in different directions to various degrees and make his results difficult to interpret. Bauer, Carlsson' and Lindquist (6), using a method of calculation analagous to ours, calculated exchangeable pool space and bone accretion rates in normal subjects

from data provided by their own and other published studies. In only one group are the figures expressed in liters of serum. Four normal subjects in this group had exchangeable pools and bone accretion rates higher than our normal subjects but these four were in various stages of convalescence from fracture or nerve injury. The results from the other groups were calculated from specific activities and are expressed in grams of calcium. Since the serum calcium of each subject is not given, one can convert their figures to liters of serum only by assuming an average normal serum calcium of 5.0 mEq per L of serum. Since the high and low extremes of normal serum calcium in most laboratories are about 18 per cent apart, such an assumption would not lead to valid comparison. Conversely, if one assumes the ratio of Sr/Ca to be the same in all parts of the exchangeable pool and the rate of movement into bone to be the same for the two elements, one can convert the results of the present study to milliequivalents of calcium by multiplying the result for each subject by his serum calcium value. Such conversion gives our group of normal adult subjects slightly smaller exchangeable space and faster bone deposition rates than those recalculated by Bauer and associates (6) from the Ca⁴⁵ data of Bronner, Harris, Maletskos and Benda (2) (1 patient), Krane, Brownell, Stanbury and Corrigan (3) (4 subjects) and the figures reported by Heaney and Whedon (7) for ¹ normal adult. Some of these variances might result from the lower intracellular penetration of strontium (viz. Table I) and our overestimation of bone deposition by not measuring fecal excretion.

Because of the moderate variation in values for normal subjects reported by different authors it is apparent that any comparison of changes in abnormal states must be in reference to normal figures obtained by each group. Because of the expected biological variation within any group, the small number of normal subjects reported by most authors makes such comparison liable to reservation except in those abnormal states associated with dramatic alteration in skeletal metabolism, such as Paget's disease. In this condition only greatly increased exchangeable pool size and bone deposition rates have been reported (7, 8, 11). This is true by our method also, and is in keeping with previous concepts of bone metabolism in this disease.

Hyperthyroidism is associated with negative balance of calcium and phosphorus, which in extreme cases may lead to roentgenographically evident osteoporosis and pathological fractures. It has recently been proposed that the osteoporosis of acromegaly and hyperthyroidism may be related to the unavailability of protein for the production of bone matrix and a resulting decrease in bone formation (47). Our data are not compatible with this proposal and confirm the enlarged pool of exchangeable calcium and rapid turnover rate found in hyperthyroidism by Krane and his associates (3), Heaney and Whedon (7), Dow and Stanbury (11), and Fraser and colleagues (15). Since bone is forming rapidly in these conditions, the development of osteoporosis must be due to even more rapid rates of osteolysis.

Osteoporosis is a common feature of hyperadrenocorticism. Elevation of the urinary excretion rate despite the reduced size of the pool in two patients with Cushing's disease suggests that bone dissolution is responsible for the demineralization. The patient with adrenocortical adenoma and symptoms of short duration had a very rapid urinary excretion rate and an apparent effort (unsuccessful) to compensate for increased bone dissolution by a slight increase in bone deposition rate. A similar rapid rate of urinary excretion and 15 per cent increase in bone deposition is an early feature of corticoid overdose in normal subjects (48).

Albright's hypothesis that bone formation is decreased in postmenopausal osteoporosis has recently been challenged (49-51). Patients with postmenopausal osteoporosis have been reported to have calcium $(7, 9, 11)$ and strontium $(11, 15)$ kinetics indistinguishable from those of normal subjects. Our data show that the rate of bone formation is decreased in osteoporosis and that this difference persists after correction for body size. The histograms for exchangeable pool size and bone deposition rate for the control subjects and osteoporotics show moderate overlap between the two groups, but the groups clearly comprise two populations. Our values for osteoporotics are similar to those reported by others. Hence, interpretation of these values as "low" depends on the relatively high values of our normal subjects

compared with the published normal values discussed above. Lower than normal values for strontium retention by osteoporotics have been reported by others (6, 13, 16). Bone accretion rate of P^{32} is also decreased in osteoporosis (52). These data are in harmony with Albright's hypothesis that postmenopausal osteoporosis is due to decreased osteogenesis, but do not prove it, since the low rate of bone formation could reflect a decrease in skeletal mass, as in the two cases of advanced Cushing's disease. However, if the decreased skeletal mass of postmenopausal osteoporosis is due to an increased rate of bone resorption, calcium and strontium metabolism might resemble that of Cushing's disease, in which the urinary excretion rate is rapid in spite of skeletal depletion manifested by osteoporosis and decreased exchangeable pool size. In our experience, long-standing postmenopausal osteoporosis is rarely associated with increased calciuria. If postmenopausal osteoporosis is associated with increased bone resorption, as suggested by others, the urinary excretion rate might be normal if exogenous calcium was curtailed and bone deposition rate was normal. Hypercalciuria might result from normal bone resorption with decreased rate of bone deposition. This situation occurs in the osteoporosis of disuse or immobilization, which is regularly accompanied by marked hypercalciuria. Physical strain is considered to be a normal osteoblastic stimulus and its loss results in decreased osteogenesis. This concept is supported by the decreased bone accretion rate in an immobilized subject (6) and by the greatly increased bone deposition rates in our group of hard-playing athletes. The decreased bone deposition rate in postmenopausal osteoporosis, as in immobilization osteoporosis, probably reflects impaired osteogenesis, but it is not yet clear whether this is due to abnormal bone mineral metabolism or bone matrix formation.

Unlike patients with osteoporosis, all reported hyperparathyroid patients have had enlarged exchangeable calcium pools and rapid bone turnover rates (11, 15). This is not surprising, since there is more exchange surface in the actively metabolizing bone. Secondary increase in osteoblastic activity is thought to occur in hyperparathyroidism only when bone involvement is well developed and changes are roentgenographically evident. In our four patients with hyperparathyroidism who had roentgenographic changes or rise in serum alkaline phosphatase or both, the exchangeable pools were large and bone deposition rates rapid. The 17 patients who had normal bones by X-ray and alkaline phosphatase tests but showed microscopic evidence of bone involvement had small but significant increases in strontium space and turnover. Seven patients with no microscopic foci of bone resorption had normal values for pool size and decreased rates of bone deposition. Thus, the degree of bone involvement in hyperparathyroidism measured by strontium movement correlates well with that found histologically. In 11 patients with recurrent nephrolithiasis who were distinguishable from patients with hyperparathyroidism only by their lack of hypercalcemia. the pool size and total turnover rate were normal, but more mineral was being channeled to urine than in normal subjects and bone formation was slightly decreased. Four patients studied by Fraser and co-workers (15) before and after cure of hyperparathyroid bone disease showed continued avidity for strontium for several months. One of our patients with a rapid initial bone deposition rate still had high values ¹ week after operation. Four other patients had normal or low bone deposition rates before operation and these did not change after removal of parathyroid adenomas (Table IV). Although the number of liters of exchangeable pool being deposited daily in bone does not change, the fall in calcium concentration throughout the pool postoperatively results in less actual calcium being deposited in bone. The decrease in urinary excretion rate of strontium postoperatively parallels the decrease in hypercalciuria usually seen when hypercalcemia is corrected.

SUM MARY

1. Skeletal dynamics were calculated by usual dilution formulas, using stable strontium as a tracer, in 25 normal subjects, 14 athletes, 26 patients with postmenopausal osteoporosis, 28 with primary hyperparathyroidism, 3 with hyperadrenocorticism 8 with acromegaly, 7 with thyrotoxicosis, 11 with urolithiasis, ⁵ with Paget's disease of bone, and ¹ with vitamin D poisoning. The technic requires that ¹⁰ mEq of strontium gluconate be injected intravenously and blood and urine concentrations be measured for 4 to 6 days.

2. In normal subjects the rapidly miscible pool was equivalent to 42.7 ± 1.1 L of serum, turning over at a rate of 13.5 ± 0.6 L daily, of which 3.9 \pm 0.2 L was excreted by the kidney and 9.6 \pm 0.4 L went to bone. Since only approximately 2.5 per cent of the pool is excreted in the feces daily, fecal excretion was not measured routinely. Good reproducibility was found in 21 duplicate studies.

3. Intense muscular exercise (athletes) was found to expand the pool greatly and to accelerate the rate of deposition in bone.

4. Kinetically, two divergent types of osteoporosis were differentiated. A small pool and low rate of bone deposition were found in postmenopausal osteoporosis and Cushing's disease of long duration. The large pool and rapid rate of bone deposition in thyrotoxicosis was confirmed and also found in acromegaly. In these two, excessive bone resorption is postulated. Urinary excretion rate was excessive in Cushing's disease. thyrotoxicosis, and acromegaly.

5. In hyperparathyroidism with clinically evident osteitis, expanded pools, greatly increased turnover, urinary excretion, and bone deposition rates were confirmed. In patients with normal roentgenographic appearance and phosphatase, bone involvement was shown by slight increase in bone deposition rate and microscopic foci of resorption on iliac crest biopsy. In seven patients without histological foci of resorption, the bone deposition rate was not increased.

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APPENDIX

Tables I through IX give clinical and experimental data
on individual subjects. In each table $\%$ TRP = per cent In each table $\%$ TRP = per cent renal tubular resorption of phosphate, $k =$ serum strontium disappearance rate constant per day, $E =$ exchangeable pool size in liters, $T =$ exchangeable pool turnover in liters per day, $U =$ urinary excretion rate in liters per day and \vec{B} = bone deposition rate in liters per day.

APPENDIX TABLE ^I

Healthy subjects, average activity

APPENDIX TABLE II

San Quentin athletes *

					Serum								
Sex	Age	Wt	Ht	Ca	P	Phos- pha- tase	Urine Ca	$T_{\rm RP}^{\%}$	k	E	\boldsymbol{T}	\boldsymbol{U}	B
	yrs	kg	cm	mEq/L	mg/ 100 ml	SJR unitst	mEq/ 24 hrs						
М	26	70.0	174	5.10	3.7		8.9	82	0.412	43.8	16.1	5.6	17.0 11.5
М	34	71.9	185	5.40									9.2
М	28	68.7	171	5.45	4.5		11.9	78	0.383	56.4	21.6	7.4	14.2
м	25	67.8	175	5.50	3.2		11.1	81	0.361	47.2	17.0	5.2	11.8
М	28	74.2	175	5.40	4.0		13.7	85	0.347	50.0	17.4	5.8	11.6
м	25	81.0	180	5.35	3.9		11.7	83	0.425	58.6	24.9	7.3	17.6
М		73.7	173	5.05	3.3		11.1	81	0.398	61.6	24.6	5.8	18.8
м	28	69.6	170	5.15	4.2		11.3	87	0.425	49.5	21.1	5.2	15.9
м	25	73.4	182	5.20	3.4		11.2	82	0.286	71.8	28.6	4.9	23.7
м	30	79.4	177	5.15	2.5		10.2	76	0.318	68.2	21.7	5.7	16.0
М	31		170	5.15	2.9		12.6	75	0.368	60.2	22.2		15.7
м	30	91.8	177	5.45	4.6		11.9	83	0.265	64.3	17.1	4.9	12.2
				5.10	3.3		16.5	83	0.315	65.4	20.7	5.5	14.1
		33	67.9		5.40	2.9 3.2		7.0 10.4	75 80	0.367 0.325	54.8 44.4	22.6 14.4	4.6 5.2 6.5

 $*$ All subjects were normal. \dagger No data.

 $\Delta \sim 10^{-11}$

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 $\sim 10^6$

APPENDIX TABLE III		
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Multiple urinary tract stones

APPENDIX TABLE IV

Postmenopausal osteoporosis

							Serum								
Name Sex	Age	Wt	Ht	Clinicat notes	Ca	P	Phos- pha- tase	Urine Ca	$\%$ TRP	\boldsymbol{k}	E	\boldsymbol{T}	U	\boldsymbol{B}	
		yrs	kg	ϵ m		mEq/L	mg/ 100 ml	SJR units	mEq/ 24 hrs						
MCD	F	57	57.7	155	Mult. compressions T and L spine; nontoxic nodular goiter	5.20	2.7	7.0	4.9	84	0.247	37.4	9.2	2.4	6.8
WAL	F	60	52.3	154	Guillain-Barre. 10 vrs: postmeno. fract. $T_{2,3,9,10}$ L _{1.5}	4.90	3.3	8.0	4.5	87	0.278	43.8	11.8	1.9	9.9
OLE	F	60	55.0	157	Fract. Iumbar vertebrae and left hip	5.25	2.8		3,9	85	0.245	27.7	6.3	1.4	4.9
NEI	F	63	33.2	146	Multiple compressions: osteoporosis (biopsy); hysterectomy at 40	5.35	3.4	4.9	4.1	86	0.258	34.7		9.0 1.8	7.2
BER	F	65	69.5	155		5.10	3.0		6.9	84	0.319	35.6	11.4 2.7		8.7
BRI	F	67	76.4	- 156	Bilat. ovariectomy at 47; compression $\dot{\mathbf{L}}_2$	4.75	3.2	4.3	6.2	85	0.254	41.5	10.6	3.4	7.2
CAM	F	67	58.2	146	Generalized demineraliz- ation; Schmorl's nodes	5.25	3.2	6.0	1.8	84	0.245	29.0	7.1	0.9	6.2
JAC	F	67	70.0	160	Fract. T _{10,12} ; urinary	5.20	4.0	6.0	3.9	95	0.295	34.8	10.3	2.1	8.2
			69.6		tract infection	5.10 5.10			3.0 4.6		0.237 0.261	33.8 37.2	8.0 9.7	1.6 2.4	6.4 7.3
KRU	$\mathbf F$	68	48.6	153	Demineralized spine; fract. T _{8.10} L ₁ ; thyrotoxic. 25 yrs previous	5.25	3.0		7.0	88	0.347	28.8	10.0	3.3	6.7
GIB	F	68	72.8	159	Femoral fract.; diabetes	5.05	3.5	3.3	2.5	91	0.181	40.4	7.3	2.0	5.3
AND	F	69	54.5	163	Osteoporosis (biopsy); de- mineralized spine; emphysema	5.40	4.3	7.2	5.0	95	0.199	35.1	7.0	5.4	1.6
BRU	F	70	54.1	145	Comp. fract. Ts-L ₂ ; cal- cification in spleen and liver	5.15	4.2	5.2	6.6	82	0.316	32.1	$10.1 \quad 4.0$		6.1
			53.9			4.95 5.05	3.5 3.2		4.9 4.1	87	0.259 0.219	33.2 34.4	8.6 7.5	2.8 1.6	5.8 5.9

SKELETAL DYNAMICS MEASURED BY STABLE STRONTIUM 1821

APPENDIX TABLE IV-(Continued)

Postmenopausal osteoporosis

APPENDIX TABLE V Hyperthyroids

Serum Phos-
pha-
tase $\begin{matrix} \text{Urine} & \% \\ \text{Ca} & \text{TRP} \end{matrix}$ Name Sex Age Wt Ht Clinical notes $\begin{array}{ccccccccc}\n\text{Ca} & \text{P} & \text{Case} & \text{Ca} & \text{T} & \text{R} & \text{P} & \text{R} & \text{E} & \text{T} & \text{U} & \text{B}\n\end{array}$ yrs kg cm mEq/L mg/ SJR mEq
100 ml units 24 hrs mg/ SJR mEq/
100 ml units 24 hrs
4.8 7.0 3.6 CLE F ³³ 50.0 ¹⁶⁸ Graves' disease 5.25 4.8 7.0 3.6 ⁸² 0.468 52.0 24.3 4.4 19.9 SYK M ⁷⁰ 56.7 ¹⁶⁰ Toxic nodule 5.35 4.3 0.392 51.4 20.2 2.4 17.8 PAP F ⁵⁹ 54.8 ¹⁵³ Menopause at 33; osteo- 5.20 3.3 3.0 2.4 ⁸² 0.292 41.1 12.0 1.5 10.5 porosis; toxic nodular goiter; comp. of T_{11-12} SMI F ⁴⁶ 60.7 ¹⁶⁷ Constipated; thirsty; 5.75 4.4 6.7 19.4 ⁹¹ 0.488 55.9 27.2 4.6 22.6 Graves' disease GIL M 32 54.5 170 Graves' disease with my- 6.22 4.2 40.7 76 0.693 48.7 33.7 16.2 17.5 opathy; osteitis (biopsy) SYA F ⁵³ 42.2 ¹⁶⁰ Graves' disease; fract. 5.75 5.0 6.0 16.9 ⁸⁸ 0.592 61.2 36.2 14.0 21.8 $T₉, L₁$ MAR F ⁵⁸ 57.1 ¹⁶⁰ Graves' dis.; uremia; 6.71 3.7 4.7 20.0 0.401 32.2 12.9 6.0 6.9 comp. fract. $T_{7,11,12}$

EUGENE EISENBERG AND GILBERT S. GORDAN

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* Clinically active in all patients.

APPENDIX TABLE VIII

Adrenocortical hyperfunction

APPENDIX TABLE IX

Paget's disease

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