Introduction Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) are one of the most commonly prescribed drugs worldwide and their use is often prolonged without clear indication. Although PPIs are widely regarded as safe, meta-analyses of observational studies has suggested PPI use significantly increases fracture-risk. Current guidelines recommend that people over the age of 50 taking PPIs may be considered for fracture-risk assessment, particularly in the presence of other risk factors.

This study aimed to assess the attitudes of UK gastroenterologists towards fracture-risk assessment in PPI users over the age of 50.

Methods A survey of UK gastroenterology consultants was conducted between 17/02/2018 and 17/03/2018 using the Survey Monkey website.

Results Of the 65 UK gastroenterologists who responded, 53.9% believed that PPI use increased fracture-risk. In PPI users aged over 50 years, gastroenterologists rarely (52.5%) or never (42.5%) assessed fracture-risk and infrequently delegated fracture-risk assessment to GPs, rarely or never in 40.0% and 57.5% of cases respectively. All gastroenterologists felt that GPs should take responsibility for assessing fracture-risk in this patient group with roughly half accepting co-responsibility. 40.0% of gastroenterologists were unaware that a 10-year fracture-risk score above 10% should prompt a bone densitometry (DEXA) scan in PPI users aged over 50. The majority of gastroenterologists had not evaluated fracture-risk with a Qfracture or FRAX score (80.0%) or DEXA scan (67.5%) in the preceding year.

Conclusions This study suggests that roughly half of UK gastroenterologists fail to recognise the association between PPI use and increased fracture-risk. Most gastroenterologists neglect fracture-risk assessment in PPI users aged over 50 and only half believe this should be their responsibility despite commonly encountering these patients. There is a need to educate gastroenterologists about the fracture-risk in PPI users aged over 50.

REFERENCES