

Study shows girls believe HPV vaccine protects from other STDs

January 6 2012, by Deborah Braconnier



Gardasil vaccine and box. Image: Wikipedia

(Medical Xpress) -- A new study published in the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* shows that almost a quarter of girls surveyed believe that the HPV vaccine will also help prevent other STDs. This new information is sparking a demand for better education when the vaccine is administered.

HPV virus affects almost 30 percent of sexually active females between the age of 14 and 19 and is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the U.S. The HPV vaccine is designed to reduce the risk of

infection by certain strains of the [HPV virus](#). The current vaccine protects against two HPV strains that are responsible for causing [genital warts](#) as well as two strains that are linked to an increased risk for [cervical cancer](#).

The new study, led by Dr. Tanya Kowalczyk Mullins from the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine. The researchers surveyed 339 girls between the ages of 13 and 21. They also surveyed 235 mothers and female guardians. Of those surveyed, 57.5 percent were sexually active.

The questions asked were designed to evaluate the perceived risk of HPV, risk of other STDs and the need for safer sexual behaviors post HPV vaccination. The results showed that 23.6 percent of the girls questioned believed that the [HPV vaccine](#) reduced their risk for getting other sexually transmitted diseases and that greater safe sexual behavior was not necessary.

While the researchers caution that this study looked at girls from a single clinic serving low-income clients and it may not accurately represent the general population, they believe that the need for more education on the HPV virus and vaccine is needed by physicians and the educational system. A stronger emphasis needs to be placed on the fact that this vaccine will do nothing to reduce the risk of STDs such as syphilis, gonorrhea or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

More information: Adolescent Perceptions of Risk and Need for Safer Sexual Behaviors After First Human Papillomavirus Vaccination, *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 2012;166(1):82-88.
[doi:10.1001/archpediatrics.2011.186](https://doi.org/10.1001/archpediatrics.2011.186)

Abstract

Objectives. To (1) examine perceptions of risk of human

papillomavirus (HPV) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), (2) examine perceived need for safer sexual behaviors, and (3) determine factors associated with less perceived need for safer sexual behaviors, all in the context of receiving the first HPV vaccination.

Design. Cross-sectional baseline analysis from an ongoing longitudinal cohort study.

Setting. An urban hospital-based adolescent primary care clinic.

Participants. Girls 13 to 21 years (for this article girls are defined as being aged 13 to 21 years) (n = 339) receiving their first HPV vaccination and their mothers (n = 235).

Main Outcome Measures. (1) Girls' perceived risk of HPV after HPV vaccination, (2) girls' perceived risk of other STIs after vaccination, (3) girls' perceived need for continued safer sexual behaviors after vaccination, and (4) factors associated with girls' perception of less need for safer sexual behaviors.

Results. Mean age of girls was 16.8 years. Most participants (76.4%) were black, and 57.5% were sexually experienced. Girls perceived themselves to be at less risk for HPV than for other STIs after HPV vaccination (P

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