

Study finds certain subgroups of black women have lower uptake of HPV vaccination

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A new Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) study has found that improving Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination rates in black women may require culturally sensitive approaches that address ethnic-specific barriers. The findings are published online in the November/December issue of the journal, *Women's Health Issues*.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection. There are more than 40 HPV types that can infect the genital areas of [males and females](#) and in advanced stages, can cause cervical cancer. Black women have higher rates of cervical cancer and lower rates of HPV vaccination than white women in the U.S., and Haitians may be an especially vulnerable subgroup of black women.

The study assessed similarities and differences in the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices toward HPV vaccination compared to actual vaccination rates among African- American and Haitian [immigrant women](#) and their daughters.

Researchers led by Natalie Pierre-Joseph, MD and Rebecca Perkins, MD of the Women's Health Interdisciplinary Research Center at BUSM, surveyed African-American and Haitian women to measure HPV knowledge. The measures included perceived susceptibility of HPV, severity of cultural barriers and trust in physicians. The researchers then

compared the survey responses to the women's medical records to determine [vaccination rates](#).

Results of the study showed that both ethnic groups had high levels of trust in their physician and nearly 75 percent of all participants would vaccinate their daughters with a physician recommendation. However, fewer than half of participants' daughters were vaccinated in the following 12 month period.

"This study addresses an important public health issue given the lower uptake of HPV vaccination among racial/ethnic minorities as compared to white women in the U.S.," said Pierre-Joseph. "It also points out the importance of looking at the heterogeneity of the African- American population and tailoring preventive efforts to the specific sub-groups," she added.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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