

# Strong public support for school-based immunisation

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South Australians believe that a school-based immunisation program is the best way to vaccinate teenagers, according to new research from the University of Adelaide.

The study, published in this month's issue of the journal *Vaccine*, was aimed at better understanding attitudes towards school-based immunisation programs compared with the family GP, council clinics and other programs and centres.

The project sought the views of South Australian adults and involved researchers from the Robinson Institute, the Schools of Paediatrics and [Reproductive Health](#) and [Population Health](#) at the University of Adelaide, SA Health, the SA Department for Education and [Child Development](#), and the University of Sydney.

Of more than 1800 adults interviewed, 76% regarded schools as the best place for adolescents to receive their immunisations. Support for school-based immunisation was strongest among parents of children currently at high school, with 88% saying school is the best place for their teens to be vaccinated.

High school-based immunisation programs have been in place in Australia since the 1970s. In 2007, Australia became the first country in the world to introduce an annual [vaccination program](#) in high schools for [human papillomavirus](#) (HPV), which is passed through [sexual contact](#) and can lead to cancers and other disease. This year, the program was

extended to include boys as well as girls.

"Public support is critical to the ongoing success of school-based immunisation programs," says Associate Professor Helen Marshall, from the University's Robinson Institute and Director of the [Vaccinology](#) and Immunology Research Trials Unit at the Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide.

"Because these programs are implemented through collaboration between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories, the programs rely on acceptance at many levels - from the community, parents, students, schools, the health and education sectors, and many layers of government."

Associate Professor Marshall says the main reasons given for supporting school-based immunisation included: convenience of vaccination during school hours, no need for prescriptions, no need to pay for the vaccination, and no need for the parent to leave work to attend a doctor's appointment with their child.

"School-based programs achieve a higher rate of vaccination among adolescents than any other program for that age group around the world," Associate Professor Marshall says.

"School-based programs also have the advantage of providing immunisations to children from our most disadvantaged backgrounds, who might otherwise not visit their local GP. This is especially important for the HPV vaccine, as those from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to regularly participate in cervical screening programs."

**More information:** [www.sciencedirect.com/science/.../S0264410X13005331](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/.../S0264410X13005331)

Provided by University of Adelaide

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