

Brazil starts HPV vaccination program

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Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff on Monday said the country was rolling out a vaccination program to protect five million 11-to 13-year-old girls against the human papilloma virus (HPV), which can cause cervical cancer.

"The state has an obligation to protect all girls," Rousseff said as she inaugurated the program in Sao Paulo.

Brazil intends over five years to produce a vaccine in conjunction with biomedical research center Butantan Institute and US pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) via a \$480 million investment, making available 41 million doses over that time frame until Brazil's labs can produce their own.

The first year of the program will see 15 million doses—three per child—administered. The government hopes to reach at least 80 percent of Brazil's 5.2 million girls in the targeted age group.

The World Health Organization says cervical cancer is the second most common form of the disease in women worldwide, each year bringing 250,000 deaths and 500,000 new cases.

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