

What do college students think about human papillomavirus vaccination?

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Preliminary results from a survey of 192 Oakland University undergraduate female students in Auburn Hills, Michigan, revealed that although a vast majority of them are aware of the human papillomavirus vaccine (HPV), about 54% are not vaccinated. This research is being presented at the annual meeting of the American Society for Microbiology.

"A [survey](#) of their knowledge on the HPV vaccination and infection indicates a lack of understanding about the consequences, therapy, and prophylaxis for an HPV infection," said Aishwarya Navalpakam. Moreover, Navalpakam and her mentor, Dr. Inaya Hajj Hussein at Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine found that there is a perceived low risk of acquiring the infection even after information about the infection and vaccination was provided. Further analysis based on demographic factors correlating with knowledge and attitudes will be performed.

Genital infections caused by HPV are the most common sexually transmitted diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate about 6 million new cases of HPV infections per year. Even worse, 99.7% of all cases of cervical cancer are caused by an HPV infection.

This study aims to understand undergraduate female students' knowledge and perceptions about the HPV infection and vaccination. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends vaccination of girls

aged 11-12 years to target women who are not sexually active. However, the 3-dose vaccination can be received up to the age of 26. Previous studies indicate that vaccination rates are low due to lack of provider recommendation, lack of access and coverage of the vaccination, and perception of low risk for acquiring the infection. Parents are known to oppose the vaccination based on the belief that it encourages promiscuity and increases the risk for other STIs.

"Ultimately, we hope to address this low vaccination rate by raising awareness, providing educational interventions, and helping decrease the incidence of cervical cancer," said Navalpakam.

More information: This research was presented as part of the 2015 General Meeting of the American Society for Microbiology held May 31- June 2, 2015 in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Provided by American Society for Microbiology

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