

Total number of HPV vaccination encounters down during pandemic

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There was an increase in human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination per

encounter for pediatric patients aged 9 to 22 years, despite a decrease in overall encounters associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a research letter published online Sept. 19 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Jenny K.R. Francis, M.D., from University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, and colleagues characterized HPV vaccination by age and season from 2019 to 2021 to identify catch-up priority groups. The analysis included 4,548 patients aged 9 to 22 years being seen for well or follow-up visits (10,469 encounters).

The researchers found that the percentage receiving HPV vaccination was higher in 2021 (35.0 percent) and 2020 (35.6 percent) versus 2019 (30.9 percent), despite a 19.3 percent decrease in the number of encounters in 2021 versus 2019. The lowest percentage of vaccinations was seen among the youngest eligible age group (9 to 10 years), representing 34.7 percent of encounters but only 0.3 percent of vaccinations. HPV vaccinations in winter 2020 versus 2019 were largely unchanged, but vaccination levels in summer of 2020 and 2021 did not catch up to prepandemic vaccination levels in 2019.

"We found a steady increase in HPV vaccinations per encounter between 2019 and 2021 despite a 19.3 percent decrease in overall encounters," the authors write. "The pandemic may have been associated with providers feeling pressured to not miss vaccination at in-person encounters."

More information: Jenny K. R. Francis et al, Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.34000](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.34000)

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