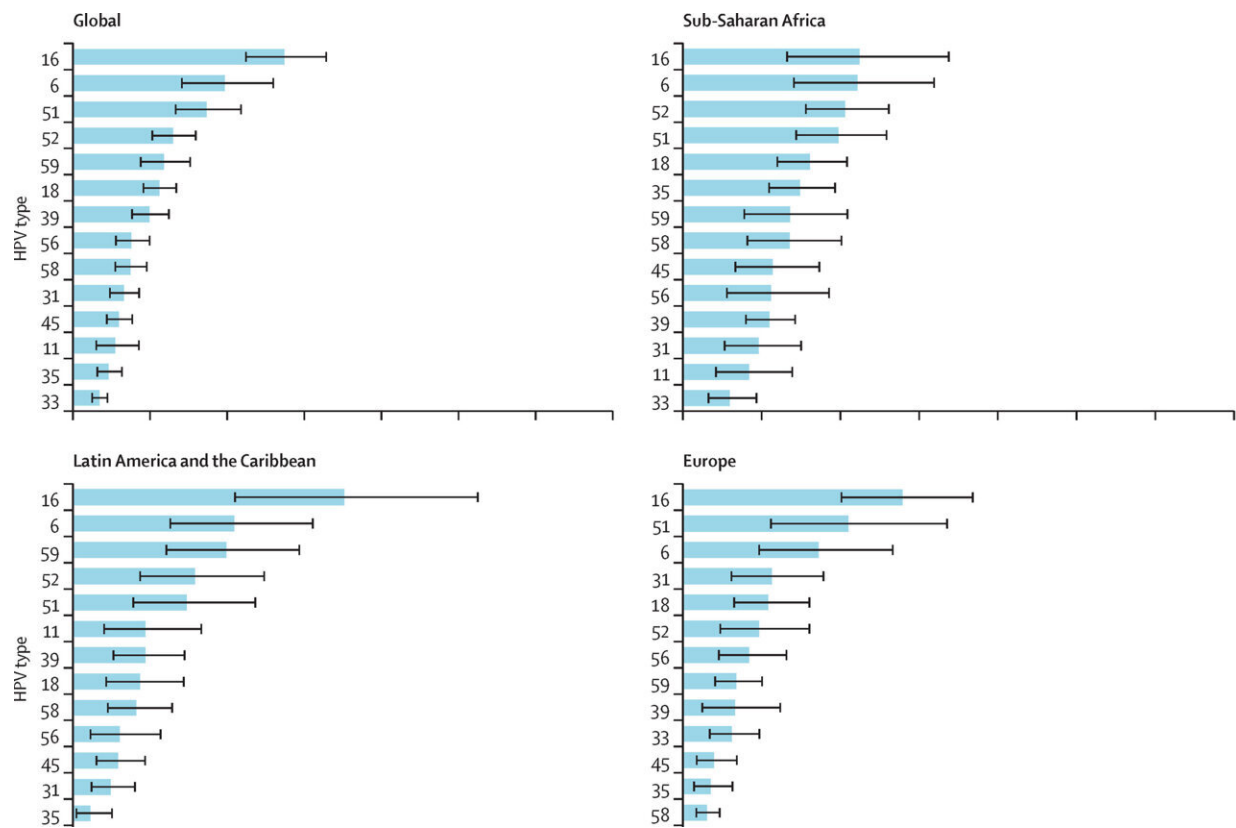


# New study shows 1 in 3 men worldwide are infected with genital human papillomavirus

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Pooled prevalence of HR-HPV types, HPV-6, and HPV-11 in men by region.

Credit: *The Lancet Global Health* (2023). DOI:

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A new study has been published in *The Lancet Global Health* showing that almost one in three men over the age of 15 are infected with at least

one genital human papillomavirus (HPV) type, and one in five are infected with one or more of what are known as high risk, or oncogenic, HPV types.

These estimates show that men frequently harbor genital HPV infections and emphasize the importance of incorporating men in efforts to control HPV infection and reduce the incidence of HPV related disease in both men and women.

The [systematic review](#) and meta-analysis assessed the prevalence of genital HPV infection in the general male population based on studies published between 1995 and 2022. The global pooled prevalence was 31% for any HPV and 21% for high-risk HPV. HPV-16 was the most prevalent HPV genotype (5%) followed by HPV-6 (4%).

HPV prevalence was high in [young adults](#), reaching a maximum between the ages of 25 years and 29 years, and stabilized or slightly decreased thereafter. Pooled prevalence estimates were similar for the UN Sustainable Development Goal geographical regions of Europe and Northern America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Australia and New Zealand (Oceania). The estimates for Eastern and South-Eastern Asia were half that of the other regions.

The majority of HPV infections in men and women are asymptomatic, but they can lead to long-term sequelae and mortality. Each year, more than [340,000 women die of cervical cancer](#).

In men, HPV infection tends to manifest clinically as anogenital warts, which cause [significant morbidity](#) and increase [HPV transmission rates](#). HPV infections are also associated with penile, anal and oropharyngeal cancers, which are [commonly linked to HPV type 16](#). The International Agency for Research on Cancer estimated that there were about 69,400 cases of cancer in men caused by HPV in 2018.

"This global study on the prevalence of genital HPV infection among men confirms how widespread HPV infection is. HPV infection with high-risk HPV types can cause [genital warts](#) and oral, penile and anal cancer in men," said Dr. Meg Doherty, Director of WHO's Global HIV, Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections Programs.

"We must continue to look for opportunities to prevent HPV infection and to reduce the incidence of HPV-related disease in both men and women."

**More information:** Laia Bruni et al, Global and regional estimates of genital human papillomavirus prevalence among men: a systematic review and meta-analysis, *The Lancet Global Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/S2214-109X\(23\)00305-4](#)

Provided by World Health Organization

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