

Girls with mental health conditions have lower HPV vaccination coverage

August 29 2024



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Girls with mental illness or neurodevelopmental conditions are less likely than their peers to be vaccinated with the HPV vaccine that protects against future cervical cancer. This is according to a new registry study

by Karolinska Institutet in Sweden [published](#) in *The Lancet Public Health*. The paper is titled "The role of mental illness and neurodevelopmental conditions in human papillomavirus vaccination uptake within the Swedish school-based vaccination program: a population-based, cohort study."

The study involved more than 115,000 girls covered by the Swedish school-based human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program. The vaccine, which prevents cervical cancer, among other things, is offered to all children in Sweden and given by school health services.

The researchers found significant differences when examining the association between vaccination coverage and psychiatric diagnoses or the use of psychotropic medications.

Girls with psychiatric diagnoses had an 11% lower vaccination coverage of the first dose of the HPV vaccine compared to girls of the same age without such diagnoses. The difference was particularly pronounced among girls with autism or intellectual disability, who had over 20% lower vaccination coverage.

Girls who received medication for mental health conditions had a 7% lower vaccination coverage, but the figures varied significantly depending on the type of medication prescribed. Among girls receiving [antipsychotic medication](#), vaccination coverage was as much as 32% lower compared to girls of the same age without such medication.

"Our study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to ensure equitable health care for all children," says Kejia Hu, postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Environmental Medicine, Karolinska Institutet. "All girls should have [equal access](#) to life-saving vaccines, regardless of their mental health status."

In contrast, girls with [psychiatric diagnoses](#) or mental illness who received the first dose of vaccine were as likely as their peers to receive the second dose of vaccine, which is given within one year of the first dose. In addition, parental mental health conditions did not significantly impact [vaccination coverage](#) in their daughters.

"More research is needed to find out the underlying reasons why fewer girls with mental illness or neuropsychiatric conditions are vaccinated against HPV so that we can tackle this challenge," says Karin Sundström, senior researcher at the Center for Cervical Cancer Elimination at the Department of Clinical Science, Intervention and Technology, Karolinska Institutet.

More information: Kejia Hu et al, The role of mental illness and neurodevelopmental conditions in human papillomavirus vaccination uptake within the Swedish school-based vaccination programme: a population-based cohort study, *The Lancet Public Health* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/S2468-2667\(24\)00182-8](#)

Provided by Karolinska Institutet

Citation: Girls with mental health conditions have lower HPV vaccination coverage (2024, August 29) retrieved 30 August 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-08-hpv-vaccination-coverage-girls-mental.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--