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Parental Attitudes Regarding HPV Vaccination of Pre-Adolescent and Adolescent Females in Arizona

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Background

HPV (human papillomavirus) is considered to be the most pervasive sexually transmitted disease among sexually active young adults in the U.S. and is responsible for approximately 90% of cervical cancers worldwide. In 2006, the FDA (Federal Drug Administration) licensed the first HPV vaccine for use in girls aged 9 to 26; however, evidence shows that vaccine acceptance rates among parents of adolescent females remains low throughout the country.

Objectives

To assess parental attitudes and beliefs regarding HPV and HPV vaccination of pre-adolescent and adolescent females in order to identify factors that affect intent to vaccinate.

Methods

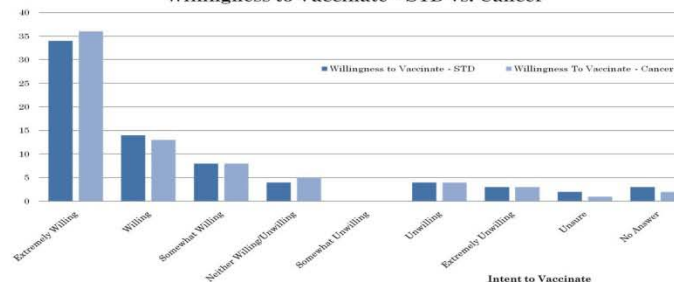
A written and/or internet-based questionnaire instrument was distributed to parent members of the Arizona PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) and the general internet population within Arizona. The questionnaire instrument was adapted from a survey used to assess knowledge, attitudes and intentions to vaccinate against HPV among Canadian parents in 2007. The original survey was created by Dr. Gina Ogilvie and is based on the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Results

From March 2010 to August 2010, 101 participants completed a 38-question survey assessing parental attitudes regarding HPV vaccine and intention to vaccinate, knowledge of HPV and the HPV vaccine and parental perceptions regarding adolescent sexual behavior. Data from 72 eligible surveys was analyzed. The number of participants included in our study is inadequate to provide statistically significant results

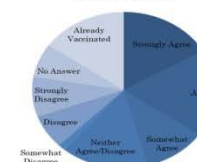
- ❖ The majority of respondents were Caucasian females residing within Maricopa County
- ❖ 61.1% of parents intend to vaccinate their daughter(s) with the HPV vaccine.
- ❖ 92% of parents who did not intend to vaccinate their daughter(s) with the HPV vaccine have completed some or all of a post-secondary education.
- ❖ Parents who believe that the HPV vaccine promotes early sexual debut, unsafe sexual behavior, and sexual promiscuity showed less intent to vaccinate with the HPV vaccine than parents who did not believe that the HPV vaccine promotes high-risk sexual activity (25–40% vs. 68.6–74%)
- ❖ 75% of parents are aware that HPV causes cervical cancer and is transmitted by sexual contact; however, 75% of parents answered incorrectly to other HPV knowledge questions.
- ❖ Parents who believe vaccinations, in general, are unsafe, universally did not intend to vaccinate with the HPV vaccine.
- ❖ Long-term side effects (51.3%) and unknown efficacy (30.5%) were the most commonly reported concerns regarding the HPV vaccine.

Willingness to Vaccinate – STD vs. Cancer



Approximately 75% of parents would be willing to vaccinate with an "anti-cancer" or an "anti-STD" vaccine regardless of their intent to vaccinate with the HPV vaccine.

Intent to Vaccinate



Conclusions

Barriers to HPV vaccination included parental aversion to vaccinations, miseducation or lack of education about HPV infection, belief that vaccination will encourage risky sexual behavior among teenagers and concerns regarding efficacy and safety of the HPV vaccine.

Efforts to educate parents regarding these concerns may result in increases in vaccination coverage.

HPV Fast Facts

- Most HPV infections produce no symptoms and resolve spontaneously in less than 1 year
- HPV can cause cervical, vulvar, vaginal, rectal, penile, and prostate cancers, as well as genital warts
- An estimated 75% of people of reproductive age are, or have previously been, infected with HPV
- HPV is not a reportable STD
- HPV vaccination is optional in Arizona

