

A Multivariant Analysis of Parental and Adolescent Perceptions of HPV and the HPV Vaccine as a Determinant of Vaccine Acceptance

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Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the world, infecting the skin and mucous membranes. There are over 100 types of HPV which are transmitted through intimate skin to skin contact, or from mother to child during pregnancy. Once the virus has been acquired, it persists for life. HPV is the leading cause of cervical, oropharyngeal, and anal cancer. Some patients may be asymptomatic in the early stages of cervical cancer; therefore, they will receive regular cancer screening if they test positive for HPV. Treatments for cervical cancer include surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

Although the HPV vaccine may be perceived differently in different populations, it has been proven to be effective and safe. The vaccine reduces the risk of HPV associated cancers and disease. The first vaccine dose is recommended for both girls and boys ages 11-12, although ages 9-45 are eligible for the vaccination. The second dose of the HPV vaccine should be given 6-12 months after the first. Three doses are required for immunocompromised patients or those receiving their first dose at age 15 or older.

This study investigates factors which influence the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents and their parents on HPV and the vaccine, and whether they correlate with the child receiving the vaccine. A sample of parents, along with their children, ages 9 to 17, was obtained, and information collected through surveys. Data was analyzed, using frequency analyses, Chi square tests, and regression analyses, as applicable, to assess the relationship between demographics and HPV disease and vaccination knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and previous HPV vaccination. Parental perception regarding benefits of vaccine and their sources of information were found to be strong positive predictors of parental intention to vaccinate children with the HPV vaccine. Adolescents' age, race/ethnicity, and health care plan also were found to be important factors, determining vaccination rates.

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