

International Congress on
Vaccines, Immunology & Antibiotics

December 06-07, 2018 | Amsterdam, Netherlands

Knowledge of human papillomavirus and acceptability to vaccinate in adolescents and young adults of the Moroccan population

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Study Objective: Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection is estimated to play an etiologic role in 99.7% of cervical cancer. Vaccines can prevent up to 70% of the cervical cancer caused by HPV 16 and 18. The present study was designed to define the knowledge of HPV and HPV vaccine acceptability among Moroccan youth. Design, setting, participants, interventions, and main outcome measures: A nationwide anonymous questionnaire with a sample of 688 adolescents (12-17 years) and 356 young adults (18-30 years) was organized, that asked about HPV, origin of cervical cancer, Papanicolaou (Pap) test, and acceptability of HPV vaccine. Data were analyzed using univariate and multivariate logistic regression methods.

Results: Overall, a low frequency (213/1044 5 20%) of HPV knowledge was observed among the studied population. A multivariate model analysis showed that age, educational level, and knowledge of the Pap test remained significantly associated factors with HPV knowledge. Additionally, only 27% (282/1044) of participants were willing to accept HPV vaccination. Highest acceptability was observed among young adults compared with adolescents (166/356 5 46.6% vs 116/688 5 16.9%). Sixty-two percent (103/165) of male participants accepted the HPV vaccine compared with only 20.4% (179/879) of female participants. Educational level, type of school, and knowledge of the Pap test were associated factors with HPV vaccine acceptability in a multivariate model analysis.

Conclusion: The present study showed a low level of HPV knowledge and HPV vaccine acceptability among Moroccan youth. Promotion of activities and sensitization are required to maximize public awareness in the future. This objective can be achieved with the use of media, active efforts by health care providers, and introduction of sexual education in school programs.

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