Factors associated with women’s attitudes towards HPV vaccination: results from a large population survey in Ireland

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The ‘HPV vaccine’ landscape in 2010

• Time of rapid change in cervical cancer prevention in Ireland

• A national HPV vaccination programme was rolled out in September 2010 (girls only)

• Women’s attitudes key determinants of the success of current & future prevention strategies
Methods

• Survey mailed to 5,553 randomly sampled women aged 20-64 years, summer-autumn 2010

• 3,470 surveys returned (response rate=62%)

• Socio-demographics, HPV knowledge scores, general vaccine attitudes, ‘other’ health behaviours

• Multiple logistic regression used to develop models for 2 of the statements: (1) HCP recommendations & (2) benefits outweighing safety concerns
## Results (1)
### Attitudes towards the HPV vaccine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If health professionals recommend it, all young girls should receive the HPV vaccine</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of the HPV vaccine outweigh safety concerns</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because HPV causes cervical cancer, it is important that you girls get the HPV vaccine</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having the HPV vaccine means girls won’t need to have smear tests in the future</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls should not get the vaccine as not a lot is known about the long-term side effects</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls who receive the HPV vaccines will be more likely to have unprotected sex</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Health professionals recommend:

- Completed third level education

Health professionals recommend:

- Getting vaccinated could make a positive contribution to someone's health
- More people should be vaccinated to prevent outbreaks

Less likely to have asked their GP for extra health checks

Negative attitudes to vaccines in general
Low HPV knowledge

Disagree with statement that benefits outweigh safety concerns

Less likely to have asked their GP for health checks

Negative attitudes to vaccination in general

- Getting vaccinated could make a positive contribution to someone's health
- More people should be vaccinated to prevent outbreaks
- Not enough is known about the long term effects of vaccines
The landscape now…

- Increased awareness of HPV and HPV vaccine
- Increased (adverse?) media coverage
- Anti-HPV vaccine campaigns (particularly on social media)
- Attitudes and views are likely to have changed
Turning a corner?

- Some preliminary work (marketing company focus groups) has helped inform HSE NIO campaigns
- ‘Stories sell’ – cervical cancer survivors, parents who have consented to having daughters vaccinated
Conclusions

• In 2010, attitudes towards HPV vaccination programme were generally positive, some worrying attitudes were revealed among women.

• Factors associated with ‘negative’ HPV vaccination attitudes
  – Women with negative attitudes towards vaccines in general
  – More educated women, those less likely to ask GP for health checks e.g. blood pressure, cholesterol check have negative HPV vaccine attitudes?

• Need for up to date evidence on parents attitudes towards HPV vaccination in light of recent controversies
  – Comparison of attitudes views from 2010 v 2017?
  – Attitudes towards inclusion of boys in the programme?
  – Adolescents views on HPV vaccine?
  – Co-design of specific information and education initiatives?
Thank you

- All the women who participated in the study
- The general practices & well woman centres who helped recruit women

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www.cerviva.ie