A new study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* [1] provides some sobering statistics about the use of the vaccines that can prevent cancers caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV). Although primarily developed to prevent HPV infection (and thus, cervical cancer) in women, its use has been expanded to boys, since the vaccine also protects against anal and oropharyngeal cancers (the tongue, tonsils, soft palate [2], and pharynx [3] a part of the throat).

The paper entitled Uptake, Coverage, and Completion of Quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus Vaccine in the Vaccine Safety Datalink, July 2006 June 2011 documents a decrease in the percentage of vaccinated males and females between ages nine and 26 during the time interval above. And it is not good news.

The graph, which is based on data for over 700 thousand inoculations speaks for itself. The number of vaccines administered peaked at almost 69 thousand during the 3rd quarter of 2007, but since then have declined by two-thirds. In the second quarter of 2010, only 23 thousand doses were administered.

Lead author Mark. A. Schmidt of The Center for Health Research, Kaiser Permanente Northwest, Portland, Oregon writes, Our results, showing only 42% females and 30% of males completed the three-dose series within a year of receiving their index shot, are also concerning, because these individuals maintained continuous insurance enrollment over the course of the study period and have overcome other barriers to HPV4 series (quadrivalent HPV vaccine) initiation.

In other words, it is not the cost that is preventing people from getting vaccinated. It is choice.
Which is particularly disturbing to ACSH's Dr. Gil Ross, who says, There are exactly two cancer causing infections in the world the other being hepatitis B that can be largely prevented by vaccination. Given the safety and efficacy of the both HPV vaccines, it is simply disgraceful that they are not being used more. There is no question that this downward trend in vaccination rates will unnecessarily cost lives years from now.

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