

Cancer vaccine: safe, effective and under-utilized.

By ACSH Staff — June 23, 2015



A multi-center study evaluating the immune response to a new

type of HPV vaccine among 3,066 girls and boys aged 9-15 confirmed prior results among women aged 16-26: the vaccine provokes appropriate [immune response](#) [1], and is safe.

Study participants came from 17 countries and were required to be sexually inexperienced and without prior HPV vaccination. Researchers from 9 different countries did the analysis, led by Dr. Pierre Van Damme from Antwerp, Belgium, along with several scientists from the Merck vaccine group (Merck developed the Gardasil HPV vaccine). Prior studies showed minimal side effects and excellent immune response among young adult women, and the current study was designed to bridge the findings in young women to girls and boys aged 9 to 15 years. Injection site pain and low-grade fever of brief duration were the only side effects noted.

ACSH's Dr. Gil Ross had this comment: And bridge it, they did. The results in both genders were impressive: 99 percent of the group seroconverted (became antibody-positive to the virus) to each of the nine different serotypes in the vaccine. Ninety percent remained seropositive at 36 months after the vaccination. Studies using the quadrivalent vaccine showed continued immune protection for as long as 96 months, so hopefully the 9-valent vaccine will be at least equally long-lasting. The uptake of HPV vaccines remains disturbingly low: this is a public health issue of the first order. Given its safety and efficacy, and its ability to protect against an STI that is causative for cancers of the reproductive tract as well as the throat, there is just no reason why everyone not yet exposed to HPV should not receive it. Perhaps if the officials who run our federal and state public health agencies would spend more time, money and effort towards educating the public about this, more young people would become protected, and the toll of cervical, ano-rectal, and oral/pharyngeal cancer would decline.

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2015/06/23/cancer-vaccine-safe-effective-and-under-utilized>

Links

[1] <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2015/06/16/peds.2014-3745.abstract>