

Agreement with Popular HPV Vaccine Myths Among Michigan Adults

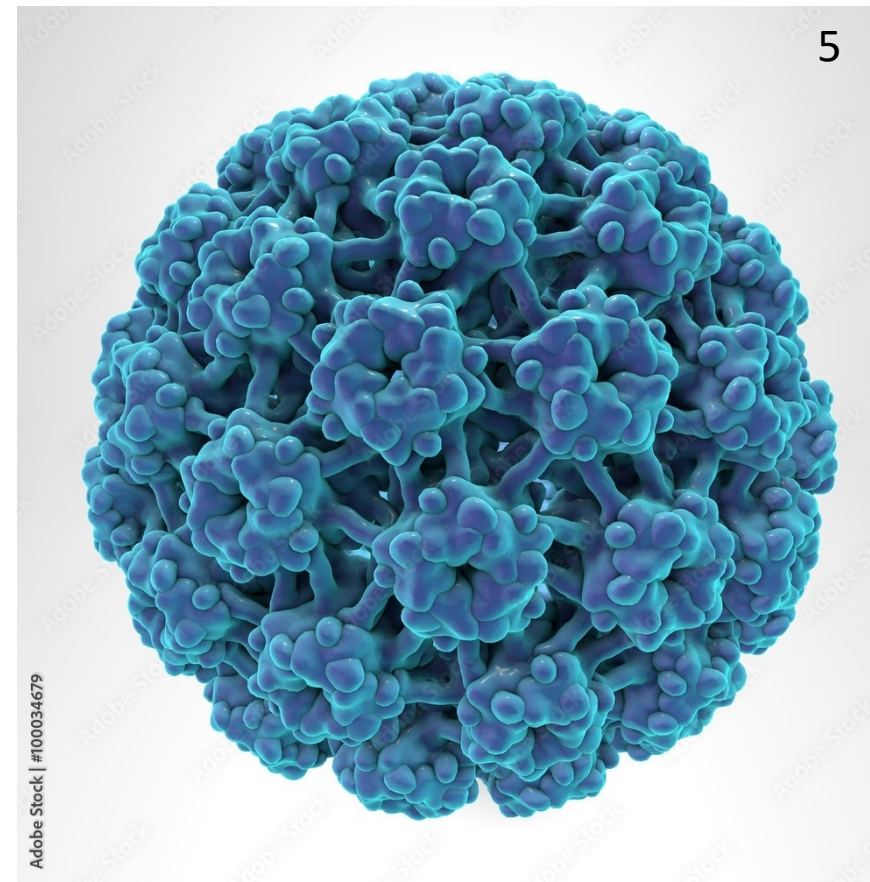
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Introduction

- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) remains one of the most common risk factors for malignancy ¹
- Although 90% of these malignancies can be prevented by vaccination, the Michigan HPV vaccination rate remains behind the national average ²⁻³
- Over 90% of cervical cancer is thought to be linked to HPV ⁴
- HPV is also a leading cause of oropharyngeal, anal, and genitourinary cancers
- We sought to estimate the proportion of Michigan adults who believed in several misconceptions about the HPV vaccine



Aims and Objectives

Our primary aims were:

- Provide preliminary estimates of the proportion of Michigan adults who agreed with widespread misconceptions about the HPV vaccine
- Assess knowledge of HPV vaccine in Michigan
- Identify some of the barriers to HPV vaccination
- Provide recommendations to improve the HPV vaccination rate



Methods

- Adults at American Cancer Society (ACS) Relay For Life events across Southeast Michigan were surveyed between 2019 and 2020
- Surveys were administered in person and took approximately 3 minutes to complete
- Demographic data included area of residence, age, gender, and parental status were collected
- Agreement with popular myths regarding the HPV vaccine were included in the survey, and agreement or disagreement with these questions were assessed using “True/False” questions

Results

- 389 adults were surveyed across 12 events
- Mean age 43.7 years
- 30.4% male & 69.6% female
- 63.2% parents
- <30% believe that HPV prevents oral cancers in men and women

Myths	Rate of Belief n (%)
The HPV vaccine is unsafe	138 (35.5)
The HPV vaccine has serious side effects	142 (36.5)
The HPV vaccine causes fertility issues	101 (26.0)
The HPV vaccine contains harmful ingredients	108 (27.8)
The HPV only for sexually active persons	82 (21.1)
The HPV vaccine only for women	70 (24.4)
The HPV vaccine is ineffective at preventing cancer	85 (21.8)

Conclusions

- A significant proportion of Michigan adults thought the vaccine was unsafe
 - Harmful chemicals
 - Adverse side effects
 - Fertility issues
- Our data supports the theory that vaccine misconceptions may play a notable role in hindering HPV vaccine rates in Michigan
- Less than one-third believed that the HPV vaccine could prevent oral cancers

The findings highlight an urgent need for additional steps to increase awareness regarding the HPV vaccine and interventions to improve vaccine administration rates.

Recommendations

- Address concerns about HPV vaccine safety
- Increase provider point-of-care endorsement of HPV vaccination
- Launch targeted awareness campaigns for cancer prevention through HPV vaccination
- Increase access to vaccination

References

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