

HPV vaccine should not be delayed

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Leah Smith (l) and Linda Levesque discuss the numbers from their latest research into the HPV vaccine.

New research out of Queen's University shows early benefits from the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine in young girls.

The HPV vaccine, which protects against four types of HPV shown to cause cervical cancer and anogenital warts, is offered free through school-based programs to [young girls](#) across Canada. Despite the fact the vaccine is free, vaccine rates are lower than expected a number of regions, in part because parents perceive their daughter's level of sexual activity as low at young ages.

"We observed a large and significant reduction in [cervical dysplasia](#), a precursor to cervical cancer, in girls as young as 14-17 years," says Leah Smith and Linda Lévesque, researcher with the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) at Queen's University.

This study, carried out in collaboration with researchers at McGill University, also found the vaccine is starting to decrease genital warts in this population.

"The fact that these benefits were observed in such a young age group strengthens current recommendations that vaccination should not be delayed," says Dr. Smith, lead author on the study.

This most recent study followed 260,493 girls, half of whom were eligible for Ontario's publicly funded Grade 8 HPV vaccination program in its first two years (2007/08 and 2008/09). Researchers found that among the 2,436 cases of cervical dysplasia documented between Grades 10 to 12, 44 per cent fewer cases occurred in eligible girls who received the vaccine. The research showed that one case of cervical dysplasia was prevented for every 175 eligible girls vaccinated.

"Although the vast majority of cases prevented by the [vaccine](#) would not have progressed to [cervical cancer](#), given the burden of cervical dysplasia on the emotional and physical well-being of girls as well as on the health-care system, these early reductions are nevertheless of great importance," says Dr. Lévesque.

The research was published in the journal *Pediatrics*.

More information: *Pediatrics*, [pediatrics.aappublications.org ...
s.2014-2961.abstract](https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/...s.2014-2961.abstract)

Provided by Queen's University

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