



Paediatric Society of Ghana

The Role of Healthcare Workers in HPV Vaccination

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Disclosures

Past year Working on Development Projects sponsored by:

- JSI (JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc)
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Global Alliance for Vaccines & Immunization (GAVI)
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)
- Global Fund (Chair of Ethics Committee)
- MSD, Pfizer & Novartis Foundation Novartis
- US Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)
- CO-Founder/CEO: Applied Science & Development Associates Ghana (ASDAG) Clinical Audit firm (Health Care Fraud Detection & Prevention)
- Nagasaki University School of Tropical Medicine & Global Health



The Scientific Facts and Consensus

- Cervical Cancer has an infectious etiology.
- At least 14 types of HPV can cause 6 types of cancer, skin-to-skin or skin-to-mucosa
- 6 prophylactic vaccines are currently licensed (2025)
- All HPV Vaccines protect against serotypes 16 and 18 that cause over 70% of cervical cancers globally
- All are indicated for use in females 9 and older.
- Some are also licensed for use in males



Current HPV Vaccines against Serotypes

- Serotypes 6 and 11 cause 90% of genital warts
- Serotypes 16 & 18 cause 70% of cervical cancers
- Serotypes 31, 33, 45, 52, and 58 cause about 10-20%

- Bivalent Vaccine: serotypes 16,18
- Quadrivalent Vaccine: Serotypes 6,11,16,18
- Nonavalent Vaccine: Serotypes 6, 11,16,18,31,33,45,52,58



Concerns about HPV type 35

- It is oncogenic, especially among women of black ancestry.
- Known to cause about 10% Sub-Saharan Africa
- Cause high-grade pre-cancerous lesions
- No specific HPV vaccine has been developed to target type 35



Serotype 35

- Its inclusion was not a priority in the initial vaccines because of the relatively low global prevalence.
- There is some cross-protection from genetically similar HPV types (especially type 16) included in the current vaccines.
- Reason why we need to continue to strengthen our screening and referral systems in addition to our vaccination



Target Populations

Primary Target

Girls ages 9-14

Secondary target

- **Females \geq 15 years**
- **Boys, older males or MSM, to prevent HPV cancers and warts**



Groups that Influence Parents

- **Health Care Workers**
- **MoH and Health Services**
 - GHS/CHAG/ Private services
- **Schools**
- **Religious institutions/centres**
- **Children**



Trusted Messengers!

Parents trust health care providers.

“ When thee the doctor tells me something related to my child’s health, I trust him...so we have to rely on the doctor, and the opinion of the doctor must be given importance”

-Father, Howrah, India



Health Care Workers

Frame HPV vaccination as Cancer Prevention!

- Lead with HPV vaccination helps prevent cervical cancer.
- Share that HPV is very common virus that causes almost all cervical cancers



Health Care Workers

Normalize HPV Vaccination!

- Tell people that the HPV vaccine is a regular recommended part of adolescent health
- “Your child is 9 years old and is supposed to have the HPV vaccine; it is available here. Please go for it.”
- Deflating the myth that the HPV vaccine is exotic (for the rich kids in Ghana)



HealthCare Worker

Aspirational Framing!

Align with parents' **HOPES** for their children's futures!

Pledge to get your daughter the one dose or two doses (Young people living with HIV) of the HPV vaccine?"



Health Care Worker

Repeat Positive Messages, NOT misinformation.

- Positively frame facts
 - “HPV vaccination can protect a girl’s future fertility”
 - ~~“HPV vaccination doesn’t cause fertility problems”~~
- Don’t repeat myths to debunk them (when possible)



Health Care Worker

Make Action Easy for Parents

- ✓ Use **clear, confident** messaging
- ✓ **Avoid** technical information, jargon and unusual acronyms
- ✓ Include a **clear call to action** (where/ when/ how)

Use Motivational Interviewing if familiar with the technique



Health Care Worker

Be aware of and manage teenagers with Trypanophobia (fear of needles & injections).

- Teens are asked to look away while getting the vaccine.
- Wait 10-15 minutes to manage any immediate anxieties



Health Care Worker

Courageous Clinicians: Use Every Opportunity

- Anywhere in the Health Facility for any service
- Churches, mosques, social centres
- Social Media



Health Care Worker

You have the power

to make sure NO girl grows up in your community to hear these dreaded words, “you have cervical cancer!”

-Dr. Neerja Bhatla

THANK YOU