

PAVING THE WAY FOR HPV VACCINATION IN MADAGASCAR: A COMMUNITY BASED STUDY ON RAISING AWARENESS

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Background:

A persisting infection with a high-risk human papilloma virus (HPV) can develop into cancer over time. Particularly cervical cancer (CC), of which almost all cases stem from HPV, poses a large threat to women in low- and middle-income countries, where more than 94% of global CC deaths occur. In these countries, awareness and preventative care is generally scarce. The aim of this study is to assess the variability of HPV and CC awareness as well as the willingness to access preventative care services throughout a targeted awareness raising campaign in Boeny, Madagascar. The long-term objective is to prepare the country for implementation of targeted health programs.

Methods:

A baseline survey was conducted to assess awareness on HPV, CC, and associated services. The results were used to design the awareness campaign that is being implemented. A follow-up survey of the same population, at the end of the campaign will be performed to assess its impact.

Results:

Out of a total of 1031 individuals, 4.2% (CI [3.0-5.6%]) had ever heard about HPV before. Among those, 74.4% (CI [58.8-86.5%]) knew how the virus is transmitted, but only 12.5% (CI [3.5-29.0%]) were also able to identify skin contact as a manner of transmission. Health care centers were identified across the population as the most reliable source of information (49.5%), followed by radio (43.6%). First initiatives have been implemented including information sessions given by health care workers through mobile units during international women's day celebrations.

Conclusion:

Initial survey results reveal a gap in HPV-awareness among the population, highlighting the relevance of this study to empower health service beneficiaries to improve community uptake. Our study contributes to the 90/70/90 strategy of the WHO to eliminate CC as a public health problem by 2100.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

No conflicts of interest to declare.