

PRESS RELEASE

Study investigates factors affecting acceptance of human papillomavirus vaccination among parents of Primary 4 to 6 boys and girls in Hong Kong

(Hong Kong, 21 October 2024) – **Human papillomavirus (HPV) poses a substantial healthcare burden in Hong Kong, with the potential to infect both males and females. A large-scale study involving primary schools across Hong Kong revealed a general lack of knowledge among parents of both genders. The team thinks that public education can be enhanced to boost vaccination rates. The study results were published in the *Hong Kong Medical Journal*.**

The research was conducted by the Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong (HKU). It investigated factors affecting parental acceptance of HPV vaccination for their children. Between December 2021 and February 2022, the team conducted a cross-sectional survey of parents with children in Primary 4 to 6 in Hong Kong. Sixty-five schools agreed to participate and 844 parents completed the survey.

The study found that while parents of both boys and girls were generally aware of the HPV vaccine, their knowledge about HPV and the vaccine itself was relatively unsatisfactory. On a 20-point HPV knowledge test, the mean scores among girls' parents and boys' parents were 6.03 and 6.48, respectively.

The Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme (HKCIP) already includes free HPV vaccination for Primary 5 and 6 girls at school. However, only 4.9% of parents of girls reported that their daughters had received the HPV vaccine, despite the vaccination coverage rate being 85% for the 2019/2020 school year.

Jody Chu, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy at HKU, who led the research, said, 'Some parents may not be fully aware of the government's vaccination programme and may not be clear about which vaccines are covered. Therefore, if the government implements a catch-up HPV vaccination programme for girls aged 18 years or below in the future, enhanced promotion and education efforts could be considered to further increase vaccination rates.'

The study also found that while 89.7% of parents of girls were willing to accept the HPV vaccine for their children, the acceptance rate among parents of boys was slightly lower at 73.8%. The team believes that the Chinese translation of the HPV vaccine is often referred to as the 'cervical cancer vaccine', leading to the misconception that only females need it. In fact, HPV can also infect males, associating genital warts and HPV-related cancers, including penile cancer, and head and neck

cancers. The team also believes the acceptance rate among parents of boys remains relatively high and recommends including boys in the HKCIP to eliminate HPV-related cancers in the long run.

The article “Factors affecting human papillomavirus vaccine acceptance among parents of Primary 4 to 6 boys and girls in Hong Kong” was published in the *Hong Kong Medical Journal*.
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新聞稿

研究分析影響香港小四至小六男女生家長接受人類乳頭瘤病毒疫苗接種的因素

（香港，2024 年 10 月 21 日） — 人類乳頭瘤病毒（HPV）為香港造成沉重的醫療負擔，不論男女均有機會感染 HPV。一項針對全港小學的大範圍研究顯示，小學男女生家長對 HPV 普遍認識不足。團隊認為可加強公眾教育，以增加疫苗接種率。研究結果已在《香港醫學雜誌》發表。

研究由香港大學李嘉誠醫學院藥理及藥劑學系進行，探討了影響家長接受子女接種 HPV 疫苗的因素。團隊於 2021 年 12 月至 2022 年 2 月期間對香港小四至小六學生家長進行了橫斷面調查，獲 65 間學校同意參與，共 844 名家長填寫問卷。

研究發現，男生家長和女生家長普遍聽過 HPV 疫苗；然而，他們對 HPV 病毒及 HPV 疫苗的知識相對較差，在 20 分滿分的 HPV 知識測試中，女生家長平均僅得 6.03 分，男生家長略高，平均為 6.48 分。

香港兒童免疫接種計劃已為小五及小六女童到校接種 HPV 疫苗，但僅得 4.9% 女童家長表示女兒曾接種 HPV 疫苗，而 2019/2020 學年的 HPV 疫苗覆蓋率為 85%。

負責研究的香港大學藥理及藥劑學系高級講師朱軾珮表示：「部分家長對政府疫苗接種計劃可能認知不足，未必太清楚計劃涵蓋哪些疫苗。因此，若日後政府推行為 18 歲或以下女童補種 HPV 疫苗，可考慮加強宣傳和教育，進一步提高接種率。」

研究亦發現，女生家長對接受 HPV 疫苗的意願有 89.7%，男生家長接受度略低（73.8%）。團隊認為，HPV 疫苗的中文往往被翻譯為「子宮頸癌疫苗」，令大眾誤以為只有女性才需要接種，其實，HPV 同樣可感染男性，可導致男性生殖器疣和 HPV 相關癌症，包括陰莖癌和頭頸癌等。另外，由於男生家長對 HPV 疫苗的接受度並不低，因此團隊建議將男童納入兒童免疫接種計劃，長遠消除 HPV 相關癌症。

詳細內容可參閱原文《影響香港家長對小四至小六男女生接受人類乳頭瘤病毒疫苗接種的因素》。

Source: Jody KP Chu, CW Sing, Y Li, et al. Factors affecting human papillomavirus vaccine acceptance among parents of Primary 4 to 6 boys and girls in Hong Kong. Hong Kong Med J 2024;30:386-99. <https://doi.org/10.12809/hkmj2311144>.

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