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Tackling the Low Vaccination Rate of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination among Young Women in Hong Kong

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Abstract

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is mostly transmitted through sexual contacts, and it can lead to various diseases and even cancers on human's reproductive organs. Receiving HPV vaccination has been clinically recognized as one of the effective preventive measures in decreasing the incidence of precursors of these diseases and cancers. However, in Asian countries like Hong Kong, the vaccination rate is low.To encourage the vaccination, the barriers to receiving HPV vaccine among females should be understood. A qualitative studyusing individual semi-structured interviews with 35 young women aged 19 to 23 was adopted to understand these barriers.Seven intertwining perceptual, social and cultural, healthcare providers, and financial barriers were noted, including: perception as being low-risk due to an absence of sexual contact, lack of confidence in the safety of the vaccine, suspicion of parents concerning the intention to get vaccinated, lack of positive discussion among peers, insufficient information from primary care doctors, difficulty in choosing a suitable HPV vaccine, and high cost of the vaccine.Future HPV vaccination promotion therefore not only needs to enhance the risk perception and needs awareness of young women, but educating parents and correcting their misconceptions will also be highly important. Furthermore, as primary care doctors are the first line of contact with patients and have the role of providing disease prevention education to patients, providing more support to enhance their knowledge of the HPV vaccine and to encourage their enthusiasm in providing responsive disease prevention education to patients can motivate young women to get vaccinated.

Biography

Judy Yuen-man Siuis a research assistant Professor at David C. Lam Institute for East-West Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong. She received her Ph.D degree from the School of Population Health in University of Queensland, Australia, and both M.Phil. and B.Sc. from the Department of Anthropology,The Chinese University of Hong Kong. Her publications appear in international health journals and books, covering the qualitative studies on different health issues, such as the social and cultural determinants of health, perceptions and responses on health and diseases, health and illness behaviors, illness experiences, health inequalities, and illness-associated stigma.

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