

Examining dental providers counseling on human papillomavirus vaccine: Insights from parents and dental professionals

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Abstract

Objectives: To (1) assess attitudes of parents of patients ages 9-17 years regarding Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine counseling and a same-day HPV vaccine program, and (2) assess perceptions among dental staff who actively participated in the same administration program.

Methods: We performed an observational, cross-sectional, convenience survey of parents of patients ages 9-17 and dental staff at a large-urban federally qualified healthcare center from July 25, 2022, to August 26, 2022. Parent and staff attitudes were assessed using validated instruments whenever possible. Data was analyzed descriptively.

Results: 101 parents participated (response rate: 89%). Overall, 80 parents (74.3%) reported wanting to discuss diseases prevented by the HPV vaccine with their dental provider. Twenty parents (20%) reported receiving counseling on the HPV vaccine by their dentist; 95% (n = 19) of those parents reported it did not change their comfort with their provider and 60% (n = 12) reported their child received the vaccine that day.

Overall, 44 dental staff members (32% DDS/DMD, 14% RDH-BS-Dental Hygiene, 55% Other) completed surveys (response rate: 100%). Of these, 39 (88.6%) were willing to recommend the HPV vaccine and participate in a referral program. Nearly all dentists and hygienists (95%) reported discussing the vaccine was within their scope of practice, and most (65%) agreed vaccine administration should be within their scope.

Conclusion: In a single site convenience survey within an urban, federally qualified health care system, most parents and dental staff perceived HPV vaccine counseling and administration favorably and clinically appropriate during routine dental visits.