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Factors influencing intention to obtain the HPV vaccine among a population of university women in Morocco

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Cervical cancer is a public health problem in the world with approximately 527 624 new cases and 265 672 deaths annually of which more than 86% occur within developing countries. In Morocco, cervical cancer is the second women's cancer after the breast cancer, with an estimated of 2258 new cases and 1076 deaths annually. The last decade has been marked by the introduction of a vaccine against this cancer. It is clear that the possibility of preventing cervical cancer through vaccination is an invaluable opportunity but also it is a difficult challenge. Young girls between the ages of 9 and 26 represent the target population for the HPV vaccine. As a result, the decision to vaccinate depends largely on two populations; young girls and their parents. The adoption of this vaccination by the population is dependent on several factors, in particular socio-economic. Thus, in this work we are interested in evaluating the knowledge and attitudes of university girls towards this vaccine. To this end, we conducted a multicenter survey with 1087 young woman in different regions of Morocco. The results show that 70.4% of participants are sensitized towards cervical cancer, 85% of whom said they have never heard of HPV. The rate of sensitization to HPV vaccination is about 7.8%. The rate of HPV vaccination coverage in our study population does not exceed 0.09%. Only one participant reported being vaccinated. The Analysis of the results showed, that the main barriers to the practice of this vaccine among participants sensitized towards HPV vaccine are as follows; the need for more information about the vaccine (40.5%), the fear of side effects (19%) and the need for a medical prescription (10.7%).

After sensitizing all participants towards HPV and its means of preventing, we recorded an acceptability rate of anti-HPV vaccination of about 68%. The main barriers reported by participants who expressed their refusal to practice HPV vaccination are: price (48.1%), fear of side effects (14.8%). In addition, age, family income, branch of study, educational level of parents and awareness of HPV vaccine and cervical cancer were found as factors influencing the acceptability of this vaccine. Our study revealed a low level of awareness and knowledge about HPV and HPV vaccination. Similarly, we have focused on reticence to this vaccine in our study population. This situation will not help to improve the prevention of this cancer in our country, which requires the establishment of awareness actions towards the disease and its means of primary and secondary prevention. The cost of this vaccine is a universal barrier. As a result, the introduction of HPV vaccination into the national immunization program, or its reimbursement by social security, will encourage a large population to be vaccinated. In addition, efforts must be made to sensitize physicians on their axial role in raising awareness and prescribing this vaccine.