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Are women ready for the HPV vaccine?

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OBJECTIVE.: An HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine will be available soon. Because vaccination for both boys and girls will be critical to reduce the incidence of this disease, we evaluated the willingness of women to accept the HPV vaccine and to consent to having their children vaccinated. **METHODS.:** A 20-item questionnaire was distributed to women who had children between the ages of 8 and 14 years, the likely age range of the children who will be targeted to receive the vaccine. **RESULTS.:** 200 women completed surveys. The median age for the respondents was 34.4 years (range, 23-53 years). 77% of the women surveyed would be willing to accept an HPV vaccine for themselves. 67% who had a daughter (n = 156) and 66% who had a son (n = 137) would consent to have their child vaccinated. Those not accepting the vaccine cited the risk of unknown adverse effects or their current lack of sexual activity. Women who would not consent to have their children vaccinated cited the risk of unknown adverse effects and their belief that their children are not sexually active. Male children not directly benefiting from the vaccine were also a reason for not considering the vaccine for sons. A history of an abnormal Papanicolaou smear was not associated with willingness to accept the vaccine. **CONCLUSIONS.:** This pilot study demonstrated a willingness of women to accept the HPV vaccine for themselves and their children. Gynecologists and gynecologic oncologists must focus not only on the diagnosis and treatment of cervical cancer but also on its prevention.

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