

abstract

Parental acceptance of human papillomavirus vaccination among females treated for childhood cancer and/or with hematopoietic stem cell transplantation: A cross-sectional study

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Parental acceptance of human papillomavirus vaccination among females treated for childhood cancer and/or with hematopoietic stem cell transplantation: A cross-sectional study

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Introduction: Survivors of childhood cancer (CCS) and hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) recipients are at increased risk of human papillomavirus (HPV)-associated malignancies. Although HPV vaccination is recommended for these groups, parental acceptance remains uncertain.

Methodology: We recruited caregivers of female CCS/HSCT aged ≥ 9 years from the Shanghai Children's Medical Center (SCMC) vaccination clinic. Caregivers of girls who were at least 6 months post treatment, off immunosuppressants, and disease-free were eligible. Caregivers completed a questionnaire assessing demographics, HPV knowledge, and their willingness to vaccinate their daughters.

Results: Of the 219 caregivers enrolled, 195 (89.0%) completed the survey. Among the children of caregivers who responded, 44.6% (87/195) had undergone HSCT. All respondent caregivers lacked awareness that the HPV vaccine was recommended for their daughters. Willingness to vaccinate was endorsed by 65.1% (127/195) of caregivers, and was significantly associated with a household income over ¥50,000 ($p=0.02$), the mother's HPV vaccination status ($p<0.001$), and their daughter receiving any vaccination post therapy ($p=0.02$). The most common reasons for vaccine refusal included concerns about its impact on the child's primary disease (64.7%, 44/68), vaccine safety (58.8%, 40/68), and the belief that their child was too young for HPV vaccination (50.0%, 34/68).

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Only 15 of the 127 (11.8%) caregivers who initially expressed willingness to vaccinate their children had actually initiated vaccination.

Conclusion: A substantial minority of Chinese caregivers of female CCS/HSCT are hesitant to vaccinate their daughters against HPV.

Addressing caregivers' knowledge deficits and misperceptions about vaccine safety and barriers to accessing HPV vaccination is important to improve uptake.