Rapid response
to
HPV vaccination crisis in Ireland

Dr Brenda Corcoran
National Immunisation Office Dublin
HPV vaccination programme

Commenced in 2010
HPV4 vaccine (Gardasil)

School based programme
12-13 year old girls (~30,000)

Parents sent information leaflet, consent form and contact details
Information literacy proofed

Referred to website for more information

Target 80%

Estimated uptake 1st dose

~15,000 girls not vaccinated in 2016/17

www.hpv.ie
Concerns

• Vaccine safety
• Vaccine safety
• Vaccine safety
• Vaccine causes serious side effects

• Lack of information – not given patient information leaflet
• Consent process too rushed
• Distrust in Irish health services – link to Pharma
• Anti-establishment agenda

www.hpv.ie
Response

No direct contact with parents

Other health professionals

Concerned groups

www.hpv.ie
Actions

Liaison
• The Irish Cancer Society
• National Cancer Control Programme
• Cerviva

Consistent messages re
• cervical cancer morbidity and mortality
• vaccine safety and efficacy

www.hpv.ie
**Actions**

Health professional training

- Regional immunisation updates
- GP e-learning modules updated
- ICGP meetings
- RCPI Faculty meetings
- Pharmacies
- Fact sheets/articles in journals

[www.hpv.ie](http://www.hpv.ie)
Support for vaccination teams

• Updated guidelines
• Frequently asked questions
• Regular PMO teleconferences
• Frequent updates by email and to website
• Conference May 2018
Evidence published in the Cochrane Library shows that human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccines protect against cervical lesions in young women.

The evidence also shows the risk of serious adverse events is similar between control and HPV vaccines in women of all ages.

Prophylactic vaccination against human papillomaviruses to prevent cervical cancer and its precursors

Marc Arbyn, Lan Xu, Cindy Simeons, Pierre PL Martin Hirsch

Participants asked
• for their views on how to improve uptake
• to ask vaccinated girls to take part in social media campaign

“A very much needed information day. Very informative & gives me confidence answering questions from parents.”

“Great conference. A real confidence builder for those working on the ground because it’s been a tough year with lots of stress”.

May 2017 conference
Actions

• Audit of information leaflets in countries with high vaccine uptakes in school based programmes

• Revise information leaflet for parents

• Information materials to parents at start of school year (late August)

• Delay start of 1st dose vaccines to mid September to allow parents time to consider vaccination

• Offer vaccine to older unvaccinated girls
Actions

Information for parents
• Focus groups
• Offer vaccine again and again
• Information for 6th class parents
• Revised parents leaflet (with quotes)
• More time to consent

“The HSE information on HPV vaccine is amongst the best and most detailed from any country worldwide.”
Paula Burke, Head of Immunisation, World Health Organization, Europe

“I’m really glad my mam got me the vaccine a couple of years ago. As I get older I realise how important it is for me.”
Sarah, aged 16

www.hpv.ie
Actions

Information for parents

- Website redesigned
- Short information videos from national and international experts
- Vaccinated girls and their parents

www.hpv.ie
Actions

Liaison

• Department of Education
• Post primary and primary
• School management bodies
• Principals’ associations
• Teachers’ unions
• National Parents Councils
• Science Teachers Association
Building for the future

Lesson plans for senior cycle second level schools

HPV – Human Papillomavirus

HPV Vaccine – benefits and efficacy

Vaccines: Separating fact from fiction
Actions

- Increase awareness of vaccine
- National and local radio advertising
- Social media listening
- Social media campaign
  - vaccinated girls
  - international experts

www.hpv.ie
Actions

- Alliance of health care and other supportive bodies
- RCPI/ ICGP/ IMO/ ISPHM/ IDA/ IPU/ IPNA
- Children’s Rights Alliance
- National Women’s Council
- Cancer charities

www.hpv.ie
Global

WHO Europe
• Peer support network
• Regular contact – teleconferences and meetings
• Media training

Close links with colleagues in
• Japan
• Australia
• New Zealand
Political support

May 2017 conference closed by Minister for Health

Very supportive of the programme

August 2017 launched 2017/18 programme
Impact

- Increase in uptake in 2016/17
- Increase in 1\textsuperscript{st} dose uptake in 2017/18
Launch March 2018

#ProtectOurFuture
Donal Brennan
@dona1805

If you don’t want to listen to medics about #HPVvaccine, please listen to @kimmykims31 and @laurabrennan091 - heroes telling their personal stories - much more powerful than an RCT. #vaccineswork #protectourfuture

7:05 PM - 13 Apr 2018
19 Retweets

TERRY PRONE: If the HPV vaccination trend grows, Laura will have saved women’s lives

Any doubts I had about the #hpv vaccine have now been answered! What a brave and selfless woman to come on and share her story! Amazing! @RTELateLateShow #HSE #cervicalcancer awareness!

10:03 PM - 13 Apr 2018
Communications

- Media training for local spokespersons

Research confirms HPV vaccine effective

‘No evidence’ to support doubters of cervical cancer preventer

'LIFE-SAVING' JAB Health chiefs hail jump in number of secondary school girls receiving HPV cervical cancer injection in Ireland

Strong evidence HPV vaccine is saving lives, Simon Harris says
Can women have confidence in the national cervical screening programme?

So important as we absorb #CervicalCheck controversy - Research confirms HPV vaccine effective

Research confirms HPV vaccine effective
‘No evidence’ to support doubts of cervical cancer preventer
irishtimes.com

Simon Harris TD @SimonHarrisTD · May 13
We must keep doing all we possibly can to ensure lessons are learnt & women’s healthcare is prioritised. I have directed that we introduce HPV testing ASAP. We must also all promote HPV Vaccine which saves lives & prevents cancer. Hope all will now support that call
Current update

• Increase in demand
• Likely to continue in 2018/19

What to do if your daughter didn't get the HPV vaccine before, but wants it now

Since September 2016 the uptake rate for the vaccine has increased from 51% to 62%.

• Need to measure uptake at 15 years
  • to account for catch ups
  • for international comparison
‘Vaccination plan can eliminate cervical cancer within 20 years’

Marie O’Halloran
Co-ordinator of the HPV vaccine says a reliable programme will eradicate disease

A leading expert in cancer immunology has predicted that cervical cancer could be eradicated within 20 years. Marie O’Halloran, a co-ordinator of the HPV vaccine, says the vaccine will be effective in reducing the risk of cervical cancer.

Speaking from Ireland, Dr O’Halloran said: “This is a major breakthrough in the treatment of cervical cancer.”

The vaccine, she said, has the potential to prevent cervical cancer in women who have not yet been vaccinated.

“The HPV vaccine is the most effective way to prevent cervical cancer and it is now available to all women in Ireland,” she said.

The vaccine is given to girls aged 11 or 12 years, and it is recommended that all girls in this age group should be vaccinated.

Marking eight years of the HPV vaccine in Ireland

A one-day scientific meeting focused on the practical aspects of HPV vaccination

Young women around the world now have protection against the second biggest cause of female death, cervical cancer, thanks to Gardasil, a vaccination against the human papilloma virus (HPV) that causes 90% of these cancers.

Marking eight years of the HPV vaccine in Ireland, this is a one-day scientific meeting focused on the practical aspects of HPV vaccination and scientific advances in the field. Join us for illuminating talks about a vaccine that promises to save tens of millions of lives over the coming decades, and hailed as one of the greatest medical discoveries in recent history.

Speakers include:

- Professor Ian Frazer, the immunologist responsible for the HPV vaccine administered 200 million times globally, since he personally administered the first dose of Gardasil to a young woman in 2006.
- Dr Corinna Sadler, Consultant Physician in Infectious Diseases, Cork University Hospital
- Professor James Paul O’Neill, Professor of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, Beaumont Hospital and The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
- Dr Deirdre Lundy, GP and coordinator for sexual and reproductive education courses in the Irish College of General Practitioners
- Dr Brenda Corcoran, Consultant in Public Health Medicine responsible for the coordination of all national immunisation programmes at the National Immunisation Office
- Dr Anne Moore, Lecturer and Vaccine Immunology Principal Investigator at University College Cork

All healthcare professionals are welcome to attend.
HPV vaccine uptake in other countries

Sapporo, Japan

Denmark


Source: www.ssi.dk/data

www.hpv.ie
Denmark

January 2018

Number of young women who initiate HPV vaccination per month, June 2012 - December 2017
Japan

February 2018

No association between HPV vaccine and reported post-vaccination symptoms in Japanese young women: Results of the Nagoya study
Sadao Suzuki, Akihiko Hosono
Department of Public Health, Graduate School of Medical Sciences, Nagoya City University, 1 Kaminarimon-cho, Showa-ku, Nagoya 466-8550, Japan

May 2018

Controversial Paper Claiming HPV Vaccine Causes Brain Damage Finally Retracted

Why did it take so long? 🤔 😮

PETER DOCKRILL 15 MAY 2018

A year and a half after it was published, a controversial Japanese paper linking the HPV vaccine Gardasil with neurological damage has been retracted by the journal that published it.

Retraction: Murine hypothalamic destruction with vascular cell apoptosis subsequent to combined administration of human papilloma virus vaccine and pertussis toxin

Satoshi Arai, Hiroshi Kudo, Yoshio Yamauchi, Chie Ueno, Shuhei Kobayashi, Ikuko Nakamura, Kazuo Nishida & Toshikazu Nakamura


This study investigated the effects of a combined experimental vaccine on hypothalamic destruction in mice. The study was retracted due to concerns regarding its methodology.
Rapid response to HPV vaccination crisis in Ireland

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination school-based programme for girls aged 12-13 years began in Ireland in 2016. Initially, the proportion of students who completed the vaccination course was above 80%, increasing to a high of 86.9% in 2016-17 (Fig 1). However, there was a marked decline in uptake between schools of different religious ethos, although disadvantage schools had a lower mean uptake than other schools in 2016-17 (mean 51% vs 69%, difference 18.4%, 95% CI 2.0-34.8%).

However, the proportion of girls who completed the vaccination schedule in 2017-18 dropped to 17.2%, and uptake of the first dose decreased further across all areas to an estimated 5.9% in 2015-17. This decline in vaccine uptake was due to parental concerns about vaccine safety that were spread by online media and social media, which has led to media reports and circulating misinformation, which is supported by local and national media. This paralysis resulted in the documentary cervical cancer—no regret being broadcast on national television in December, 2015, containing footage from a similar Danish television documentary.

Regarding parental trust, it was difficult without direct contact, as women at the Irish National Immunisation Office established a steering group of concerned organisations in early 2017 to encourage all key stakeholders to actively promote the vaccine. Focus groups on parental attitudes towards HPV vaccination were held and were interested in offering an alternative to vaccine uptake. The results of these activities assisted us in establishing liaisons with educational, parental, political, and other bodies, and in the hope that the focus group discussions and analysis of social media, we invited print and online media—incl. short videos on our NIH and accredited websites. Additionally, a comprehensive training programme was implemented for health professionals, enhanced by the production of a learning module.

In August, 2017, the HPV Vaccination Alliance was launched. The alliance consists of a group of 12 volunteer organisations working in the areas of health, women’s rights, child safety, and wider civil society that are committed to raising awareness of HPV vaccination. In 2016-18, a media campaign was launched featuring vaccinated girls, which was strongly supported by the HSE Vaccination Alliance and senior politicians. A cross-range of groups now promote the vaccine, which has had an immediate impact. Vaccinated girls were offered another opportunity to be vaccinated and the first dose uptake increased in 2016-17 (62.8%) to an estimated 87.9% in 2017-18. Funding powerful cross-sectional education has led to this rapid improvement in uptake, which continued with what had been seen in other countries that had had fewer public occasions in vaccine uptake, such as Japan and Denmark. It is said that this positive momentum is maintained to decrease morbidity and mortality from cervical cancer.

We declare no competing interests.

Mbende Conroy, Anna Clarke,
Tara Breen
mbende.conroy@hse.ie

For the Irish National Immunisation Office.

For the HPV Vaccination Alliance.

1. "HPV vaccination uptake in Ireland has increased from 2016-17 to 2017-18. The percentage of girls aged 12-13 years who received at least one vaccine dose in 2017-18 increased to 87.9%, compared to 62.8% in 2016-17. The Alliance has been active in promoting vaccination and educating the public about the benefits of HPV vaccination. For more information, visit the website of the Irish National Immunisation Office.

2. "HPV vaccination uptake in Ireland has increased from 2016-17 to 2017-18. The percentage of girls aged 12-13 years who received at least one vaccine dose in 2017-18 increased to 87.9%, compared to 62.8% in 2016-17. The Alliance has been active in promoting vaccination and educating the public about the benefits of HPV vaccination. For more information, visit the website of the Irish National Immunisation Office.
Summary

“A lot done. More to do”
Acknowledgements

• The National Immunisation Office
• School vaccination teams and CHO staff
• Departments of Public Health
• All other HSE staff
• All others