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**A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE ACCEPTABILITY OF HPV VACCINATION
IN MYSORE, INDIA**

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OBJECTIVE

The Government of India has recently approved an optional HPV vaccine. This study investigated the acceptability of HPV vaccination among parents and community stakeholders in Mysore, India.

METHODS

Ten FGDs stratified by sex; religion and urban/rural setting were conducted between April and August 2008. Data were transcribed, translated, coded and analyzed thematically using an ecological framework.

RESULTS

Acceptability of HPV vaccination was high in all groups. This appeared to be related more to the positive feelings about government vaccine programs than knowledge about HPV or cervical cancer. While many parents believed that some girls were at risk for HPV infection, few felt their own daughters would be sexually active before marriage. Fear of cancer was the biggest motivator for vaccine uptake. Decision making on vaccines appeared centered in the family. Fathers felt both parents were equal decision makers, while mothers believed the mother-in-law was primary decision maker. Most parents felt that girls should be immunized between 14 to 18 years of age. Middle class and rural parents were most likely to state intention to vaccinate daughters. Upper SES parents viewed the vaccine as an investment in reproductive health, while poorer rural parents measured the cost against the expense of future medical procedures such as hysterectomies. In general, there were few differences in findings among parents of different religions and urban/rural settings.

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction of an optional HPV vaccine should leverage positive feelings for current government vaccine programs. HPV vaccination will be more successful targeting girls after puberty in India.