HPV vaccination reduces the risk for head and neck cancers

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Evidence supports the association between HPV infection of the risk of head and neck cancer. Therefore, HPV vaccination is a potential strategy to reduce the burden of head and neck cancer.

One hospital-based population study (Katz, 2021) found patients who were not vaccinated for HPV had a significantly increased risk of oropharyngeal cancer (RR, 19.3657, 7.2655-51.6177). The sample size of this study was 1310334. However, this study did not control the potential confounders. The researchers in this study plan to follow the participants in the future in order to directly derive the correlation between HPV vaccination and the risk of oropharyngeal cancer. Other studies focused on indirect investigations of the association between HPV vaccination and the risk of head and neck cancer. One meta-analysis (Tsentemeidou et al., 2021) that included 15240 participants found those vaccinated against HPV had a decreased risk of HPV infection (RR, 0.54, 0.32-0.91). The author assumed the reduction in HPV infection would transfer to a decrease in the incidence of HPV-related oropharyngeal cancer.

In conclusion, HPV vaccination is a potential strategy to reduce the incidence of some of the head and neck cancers. However, more direct evidence is needed to confirm the efficacy. Real-world research and carefully designed public databases might provide an opportunity for the future research.

References

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