

Reviewer's report

Title: A semi-qualitative study of attitudes to vaccinating adolescents against human papillomavirus without parental consent.

Version: 1 **Date:** 2 December 2006

Reviewer: Pamela A Kulbok

Reviewer's report:

I. General

I believe this paper is important and of interest to researchers and practitioners in the fields of adolescent health, as well as epidemiology and cervical cancer prevention.

The questions posed by the authors were basic, but clear: first, whether parents “... agreed that a well-informed child should be able to request [Human papillomavirus (HPV)] vaccination at a sexual health clinic without parental consent,” and second, the reason for their answer. These are important questions that warrant public discussion among researchers, health care providers, parents, and adolescents worldwide.

Although very basic, semi-qualitative survey responses are presented in this report, publication of this manuscript may generate important dialogue and potential action related to adolescent autonomy and decision-making related to sexual risk behavior and serious health problems associated with HPV infection.

II. Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

a. The method section was easy to read but specific areas warrant greater detail. For example, although this study was part of a population-based survey reported elsewhere, readers would benefit from information about the response rate of the 'main' study, presented in the methods section rather than in the discussion/conclusion.

b. Also, as a reader I am curious about the theoretical and operational definition of “well-informed child,” as presented in the original survey; clarification of this term would be useful in interpretation of the results and future discussion.

c. In the results section provide more detail about the respondent groups, i.e., positive opinions (n=99), less positive opinions (n=97) and other views (n= 47). For example, how do these response patterns correlate with answers to the question on provision of HPV vaccination, i.e. 13.8% (42) strongly agreed, 33.8% (103) agreed, 26.6% (81) disagreed, 17.0% (52) strongly disagreed, and 8.9% (27) could not decide.

III. Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

None

III. Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

None

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.