Human Papillomavirus Vaccine Education in Parents of Elementary and Middle School Aged Students

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ABSTRACT
The human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is currently recommended for all children at age 11 or 12 as a protective measure against the manifestations of HPV, such as cervical cancer. Parental acceptance plays a cardinal role in the administration of these vaccines. The objectives of this study were 1) to create awareness on HPV and HPV vaccines 2) assess the understanding of parental knowledge about HPV as well as their attitudes towards HPV vaccination. Parents of elementary and middle school kids from Sanders Clyde elementary school were involved in this study which included an educational presentation on HPV and HPV vaccination that was created as per Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines. A discussion panel after the program revealed that the brief educational program on HPV vaccines resulted in a positive parental attitude towards HPV vaccination.

METHODS
An educational presentation on HPV and the HPV vaccine was created using the Centers for Disease Control recommendations. Pre- and post-surveys were modeled on the referenced previous research with support from the authors’ [1]. The surveys evaluated parental understanding of HPV as well as their reasons to support or object to vaccination for their children. IRB approval of the surveys was attempted for use before and after the educational interventions. Figure 1 demonstrates a page of the survey created for this project.

Principals of various Charleston Country public elementary and middle schools were contacted by Presidential Scholar students regarding the nature of our project. After approval, students then presented the information at a local PTA meeting as well as a parent workshop hosted by school officials. In addition to the brief 15-minute presentation, parents were supplied with the CDC Fact Sheet regarding HPV to take home. After the presentation, discussion was encouraged amongst the attending parents, school officials, and students.

RESULTS
Unfortunately, due to time constraints and the complexities of performing research within the public school system, the survey was replaced by an open dialogue between parents, school representatives, and Presidential Scholar students. The parents and school representatives were extremely receptive to the educational session and voiced agreement with the need to vaccinate their children. An overwhelming majority stated their knowledge of HPV and the vaccine improved with the educational sessions. The weaknesses of the project included time limitations and lack of IRB approval for the pre and post surveys. The project though accomplished the primary goal of spreading education about HPV to the parents within the community. Further research could build upon the foundations of this program and educational information compiled. Hopefully, continuation of the project will investigate this subject with an expanded number of school or community partners along with the survey.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH
A 2004 study investigated whether parental knowledge of HPV predicted acceptance of the HPV vaccination. Over 70% of those surveyed already had a basic understanding of HPV. These subjects could identify the causal link between cervical cancer and genital warts as well as the route of transmission. Subjects were less familiar with the prevalence of HPV infection and the association with penile cancer and recurrent respiratory papillomatosis. Overall, the study found that HPV knowledge was predictive of HPV vaccine acceptance.

REFERENCES

SUMMARY
The availability of information seems to improve the knowledge of HPV among the parents and their acceptance of the vaccine. Parents who participated in the study had an increased understanding of HPV and also appeared to have a positive attitude towards the HPV vaccination for their children. In conclusion, increased education about HPV and HPV vaccines available to the community will potentially improve the rates of vaccinations received, which would significantly reduce the incidence of HPV and its consequences.