Vaccinate boys as well as girls against HPV: it works, and it may be cost effective

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Vaccinate boys as well as girls against HPV: it works, and it may be cost effective

Protecting boys as well as girls by vaccinating against human papillomavirus may cut the incidence of genital warts and several cancers among both sexes, writes Gillian Prue

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...
vaccination has significantly reduced the incidence of genital warts among women but not among men.\textsuperscript{10}

The suffering caused by HPV related diseases is self evident. The economic costs are also considerable: a study of treating nine major HPV related diseases in Italy produced an estimate of almost €530m (£420m; $714m) a year.\textsuperscript{11} And the cost of treating genital warts was almost £17m in England in 2008.\textsuperscript{12}

Ultimately, any decision about whether to vaccinate boys should not be based solely on cost effectiveness. Public health, equity, and the human costs of HPV related disease for both sexes must be the main considerations.

Competing interests: I have read and understood the BMJ policy on declaration of interests and declare the following interests: I am a member of HPVAction.org.

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