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**Świadomość, wiedza i stosunek polskiej młodzieży, rodziców oraz
lekarzy do szczepień przeciwko wirusowi brodawczaka ludzkiego**

**Rozprawa na stopień doktora nauk medycznych i nauk o zdrowiu
w dyscyplinie nauki medyczne**

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Obrona rozprawy doktorskiej przed Radą Dyscypliny Nauk Medycznych
Warszawskiego Uniwersytetu Medycznego

Warszawa 2023

Akceptuję
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Streszczenie w języku angielskim – abstract

Awareness, knowledge and attitude of Polish adolescents, parents and doctors towards Human papillomavirus vaccinations

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is considered the most common sexually transmitted disease, and persistent infection with its oncogenic genotypes can lead to the development of epithelial cancers of the genitourinary tract and nasopharynx, particularly cervical cancer. The prevalence of this infection and the long period of development without clinical symptoms affects the high incidence and accounts for about 5% of all cancers. The best method to effectively reduce the incidence of the diseases resulting from HPV infection is vaccination. However, despite evidence-based recommendations and almost 20 years of availability of these vaccinations in Poland, they are still rarely performed.

The study aimed to investigate the awareness, knowledge, and attitude of Polish adolescents, parents, and doctors towards HPV vaccinations. The poll was conducted from 2018 to 2021 with 1535 respondents. Among the participants were 491 mature high school graduates, 302 parents, and 742 doctors working in family medicine, pediatrics or gynecology with obstetrics. Participation in the survey was anonymous and voluntary, therefore specially designed questionnaires were adjusted to each group.

The lion's share of survey participants perceive vaccination as an effective and safe method for preventing dangerous diseases and have a positive attitude toward HPV vaccination. Despite this, according to the independent statements of adolescents and parents, only about 5% of children have been vaccinated against HPV. At the same time, 25% of parents have implemented other recommended but paid vaccinations. For the questioned parents, the most significant limitation in the decision to vaccinate against HPV is unawareness of the need due to lack of knowledge. Only half of them have heard about this virus before, and 26% are aware of its potential sexual transmission. Only 25% of adolescents and 34% of parents knew about the risk of developing cancers resulting from HPV infection, and most of them claim that the viral infection can be cured with antibiotic therapy. At the same time, both adolescents and parents mostly rate school health education as unsatisfactory. In addition, two-thirds of parents have barriers to discussing sex with their children. Respondents also indicate poor accessibility to healthcare providers. Only 10% of adolescents and 25% of parents have had a chance to talk to a doctor about HPV infection and its prevention. These people are significantly more

aware of the problem and are more likely to get the vaccination. Doctors are aware of their patients' limited knowledge about HPV, but they are also often not adequately prepared to speak about this infection and prophylaxis. Although the vast majority of them declare that they recommend this vaccination, they mostly do it only a few times a year. They mention parental disinterest, lack of time, and limited availability of educational materials in the workplace as reasons for this. Significantly more active in the promotion of HPV vaccination are more experienced doctors, who regularly vaccinate themselves against influenza and administer the HPV vaccination to their children.

Although all participants in the survey have a positive attitude toward the HPV vaccination, only a few doctors actively promote it, and not many young people are vaccinated. Low public awareness is due to limited knowledge of this issue. An important goal of the health care system and public education should be to build appropriate, health-promoting public awareness, to improve the level of HPV vaccination coverage.