

# Knowledge and Behavior of University Students toward Human Papillomavirus and Vaccination

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Received: February 08, 2018, Accepted: May 02, 2018

## ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** Human papillomavirus (HPV) causes cervical cancer. This study aimed to determine the knowledge and attitude of university students toward HPV infection and vaccine prevention in Turkey. **Methods:** A total of 1563 female and male university students participated in the study. The study design was descriptive and cross-sectional. The study included students enrolled in the departments of faculties and vocational schools. **Results:** In total, 16.8% of students stated that they had heard of HPV. There was a statistically significant relationship between the mean awareness of HPV and different variables, such as age, gender, marital status, family history of cancer, and conversation about sexual matters ( $P < 0.01$ ).

As the age of the students increased, the chance of hearing about HPV also increased. Of all the students, 1.5% took HPV vaccination. Furthermore, 87.7% of the female students stated that they had heard of cervical cancer. **Conclusions:** The depth of knowledge among Turkish university students toward cervical cancer, HPV infection, and vaccination was inadequate. It is important to provide educational and counseling services by nurses to make university students aware of HPV infection and vaccination.

**Key words:** Cervical cancer, human papilloma vaccination, human papillomavirus

## Introduction

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection, and it has the strongest association with cervical cancer.<sup>[1,2]</sup> The types of HPV contributing to cervical cancer show regional variations.

HPV-16 and HPV-18 are responsible for 70%–80% of the cases. It has been reported that 15-20 types of HPV show oncogenic potentials except HPV type 6 and 11, which can cause genital warts and respiratory papillomatosis.

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DOI:  
10.4103/apjon.apjon\_10\_19

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**Cite this article as:** Cinar İO, Ozkan S, Aslan GK, Alatas E. Knowledge and Behavior of University Students toward Human Papillomavirus and Vaccination. *Asia Pac J Oncol Nurs* 2019;6:300-7.