Project Information

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Does a Customized Website Affect HPV Vaccine Use among Latino Adolescents and Young Adults?

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What was the research about?
Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a sexually transmitted infection that can cause cancer or other health problems. The HPV vaccine protects against this virus. The HPV vaccine requires two or three doses over several months.

HPV vaccination rates in the United States are low. Latinos get HPV infections as often as other racial or ethnic groups. But Latinos are at higher risk for getting cancer and other health problems from HPV.

The research team worked with Latino community members to design a customized website for Latinos about the HPV vaccine. The team wanted to learn if more Latino young adults, ages 18 to 26, and youths, ages 11 to 17, would get the HPV vaccine after they—or in the case of the youths, their parents—viewed this website. The team compared these youths’ and young adults’ vaccination rates with those of young adults and youths who only had a usual doctor visit or looked at a vaccine website that was not created for Latinos.

What were the results?
Compared with a usual doctor visit, neither viewing the customized website nor viewing general websites led to more youths completing the HPV vaccine series. Very few young adults in any group got any doses of the HPV vaccine.

Compared with a usual doctor visit, both websites helped young adults and parents of youths learn more about the risks and benefits of the HPV vaccine.

Who was in the study?
The study included 498 Latino parents of youths and 308 Latino young adults from central Colorado. All young adults were female, and 49 percent of youths were female.

What did the research team do?
The research team asked a group of Latino young adults and parents of Latino youths for feedback on a website that gave information on the HPV vaccine. The group helped customize the content and look of the website for Latino users.

Next, the team assigned young adults and parents of youths to one of three groups by chance. One group of Latino young adults and parents of youths saw the customized website. Another group saw a general website about the HPV vaccine. The third group only had their usual doctor visit.

Using a survey, the team asked the young adults and parents how viewing the website affected their decision about getting the HPV vaccine. The young adults and parents of youths who didn't see either website answered questions about HPV decision making after their doctor visits.

At the end of the study, 15 months after participants looked at the websites or got usual care, the research team looked at the young adults’ and youths’ vaccination records. The young adults and parents also completed a follow-up survey on HPV vaccine decision making.
What were the limits of the study?
The research team was unable to find vaccination records for many patients in the study. Without those records, the team did not know whether those patients got the vaccine. Young adults and parents reviewed the websites in front of people from the research team. They may have rated the websites higher than if they had reviewed the sites on their own. No males enrolled in the study’s young adult group.

The websites didn't increase how many youths and young adults got the HPV vaccine. Future studies could find ways to increase the use of HPV vaccination.

How can people use the results?
Although the websites didn't increase vaccination rates, young adults and parents of youths who reviewed the websites learned about the risks and benefits of the HPV vaccine. Healthcare providers may consider using these websites to help Latino patients learn about the HPV vaccine.

To learn more about this project, visit pcori.org/Dempsey051.