Should male children be vaccinated against human papillomavirus?

¿Se debe vacunar contra el virus del papiloma humano a niños varones?

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Dear Editor:

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the main risk factor for the development of cervical cancer in women and other types of malignancies in men, including penile, oropharyngeal and perianal cancer. These neoplasms take longer to be detected because the infection is asymptomatic and silent in men (1,2).

The serotypes with the highest infection frequency and greater virulence in both males and females are 16 and 18 (3). It is estimated that HPV infection has a prevalence of 7.5% in Peruvian women with normal cytological studies. Subtypes 16 and 18 have a prevalence of 3.8% in this population, and 68.3% in women with cervical cancer (4).

Between 2006 and 2011, the incidence of cervical neoplasms was 16 374 cases, with a mortality rate of 1 603 cases by 2011. In 2008, 35 33, 45, 52 and 58, considered to be high risk factors for anogenital cancer. The FDA recommends its use in men — who are offered protection against genital warts and cancerous and precancerous anal lesions (1,8)— and women aged between 9 and 26.

A non-temporary vaccine is used in the United States, which, besides covering the aforementioned serotypes, protects against 31, 33, 45, 52 and 58, considered to be high risk factors for anogenital cancer. The FDA recommends its use in men —who are offered protection against genital warts and cancerous and precancerous anal lesions (1,8)— and women aged between 9 and 26.

To stop a virus from spreading, we must act on the vector, which in the case of HPV is men. Therefore, including vaccination against HPV for both men and women aged between 9 and 13 years in public health policies and immunization strategies is strongly advised.

References

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Técnica: tinta, color digital