

March 11-12, 2019  
Amsterdam, NetherlandsJ Clin Immunol Allergy 2019, Volume:5  
DOI: 10.21767/2471-304X-C1-009

# WHAT DO LEBANESE WOMEN KNOW ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER AND HUMAN PAPILOMAVIRUS? A REPORT ON AWARENESS LEVELS IN URBAN COMMUNITIES

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**Objectives:** To evaluate the knowledge of Lebanese women about cervical cancer (CC) and human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. To measure the uptake of the cervical cancer screening test (Pap smear), the uptake of HPV vaccination and to determine the influencing factors.

**Methods:** 444 women with no medical background filled out a 32 item questionnaire. Collected data was analyzed in SPSS® v. 21.0.

**Results:** 45.7% aged 18 to 25 with high education qualifications (73.9%) and employed in a field not related to health (84.9%). They did not visit a general physician (64%) or a gynecologist (64.6%) regularly. 85.6% were aware of CC with a median CC symptom knowledge score of  $3.00 \pm 2.13$ . HPV infection involvement in the pathogenesis of CC was identified in 53.9% of cases. 35.6% of women were aware of HPV infection. The median HPV general knowledge score was  $5.39 \pm 2.38$  and the median HPV vaccination score was  $6.00 \pm 2.41$ . 37.6% of participants had been screened by Pap smear for CC at least once in their lives whereas 9% did not know what a Pap smear was. Screening was significantly associated with CC awareness and regular visits to physicians. Only 11.7% of participants aged 18 to 35 were vaccinated against HPV. Vaccination uptake was significantly associated with CC awareness, religion, field of work and studies, and regular visits to gynecologists.

**Conclusion:** Lebanese women residing in the urban communities are not well informed about CC and HPV. Screening by Pap smear and HPV vaccination uptakes are non-satisfactory.

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