Critical Review:

Are university students equipped with sufficient knowledge of HPV-related oropharyngeal cancers to implement preventative measures?

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This critical review examined the evidence gathered on university students' current knowledge of Human Papillomavirus related oropharyngeal cancer(HPV+OPC). All of the examined studies involved survey research — an appropriate design for assessing knowledge, but with inherent challenges to generalizability. The suggestive evidence converged on the findings that knowledge deficiencies characterized students across different campus environments. In particular, university students appeared to know little about HPV+OPC and perceived little to no risk of developing the disease.

Introduction

The Human Papillomavirus(HPV) is known as the most common sexually transmitted infection affecting both men and women. The frequently asymptomatic virus is transmitted via skin to skin contact, and with over a hundred different strains, it is estimated that nearly 75% of sexually active individuals will develop an infection at some point in their life (Canadian Cancer Society, 2017.) Furthermore, indi

between the populations may carry more implications for improved education.

Overall, this study provides suggestive evidence that knowledge gaps exist in the understanding of HPV-related oropharyngeal cancers in university students.

Trad and Caraveo (2013) reported on a author-developed web-based survey assessing general knowledge of HPV among 361 freshman students (72% female; M=19 yrs; range= 18-27+) attending their first semester at Texas State University. Invitations to the survey were sent by email, and the response rate of 10.7% was argued by the authors to be typical for these types of studies. The questionnaire development was based on an extensive literature review, and assessed HPVknowledge (transmission, risk factors. prevention, related diseases), HPV-education, demographics.

Appropriate statistical analyses were reported. Results revealed no significant differences in knowledge were found across different demographic variables. As well, low levels of HPV+OPC knowledge were observed overall.

Overall, this study showed suggestive evidence that knowledge of HPV+OPC is deficient in undergraduate students.

Merten et al., (2016) used an existing tool developed by the Mayo Clinic to survey 758 students (72% female; M=21 yrs, range=18-25 yrs) to assess their general understanding of cancer risk factors. HPV was among the seven major cancer risk factors assessed by the survey. E-mail invitations were sent out to

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exist among university students. Furthermore, there is evidence indicating that few students find themselves at immediate risk of developing HPV+OPC. Therefore, it is likely that students are participating in sexual practices without being fully informed of the inherent risks.

Survey research is the best experimental design for addressing questions related to knowledge. However, the strength of this particular design is considered to be low with some challenges to the generalizability of the data. One factor which can strengthen or weaken the results of a survey is the quality of the sample. In order to draw conclusions based on the results of survey research, the survey sample needs to be representative of the population from which it was selected. Many

