

## **Uptake of Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine and Factors Affecting the Uptake of Human Papilloma Virus Vaccination among Adolescent School Age Children Attending Selected Government and Private Schools in Colombo District, Sri Lanka**

IH Kulathunga<sup>1#</sup>, KPBIK Ariyaratna<sup>1</sup>, SMES Samarakoon<sup>1</sup>, GDI Rodrigo<sup>2</sup>, and MN Priyadarshanie<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty Allied Health Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup>Department of Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka

#isirikulathunga@gmail.com

The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is a prevalent sexually transmitted infection worldwide. The current study aimed to assess the uptake and factors affecting the uptake of HPV vaccine among female school children aged 13-15 years in selected schools of Colombo district, Sri Lanka. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted, amongst female children (n=208) in selected government and private schools. Stratified random sampling method was used in the selection of the participants. The data was collected using a pretested self-administered questionnaire. Since the study included both pre and post COVID periods the effect of the pandemic on the vaccine uptake was assessed. The data analysis was done using SPSS version 25 software. The Chi squared test was used to test the associations between categorical variables. The HPV vaccination uptake was very good with the majority (96.2%, n=208) receiving at least 1 dose (HPV vaccine) and a considerable proportion (70.2%, n=208) receiving two doses. The majority (86.1%, n=208) received the vaccine from their schools. There was no significant influence on the uptake of HPV vaccine due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the most participants (71.2%, n=208) showed a good awareness and positive attitudes towards HPV vaccination, the level of knowledge was at a poor level (73.1%, n=208) regarding the HPV vaccine and the HPV vaccination programme. The participants' parents who had completed secondary education (Ordinary Level) had a significantly ( $p < 0.005$ , 95% CI) higher awareness level. The study found that the HPV vaccine uptake amongst selected female children in the Colombo district is at a good level. It highlights the importance of strengthening educational efforts to increase awareness of HPV and its vaccination. By bridging the knowledge gap and capitalizing favourable attitudes amongst participants and their parents, it would be promising to boost vaccination rates and enhance protection against cervical cancers in future generations. Implementing comprehensive awareness programmes and distributing educational materials are the recommendations.

**Keywords:** *HPV vaccination rate, awareness, knowledge, attitudes*