

HPV vaccine knowledge and willingness in gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver

WHY DID WE RESEARCH THIS TOPIC?

- The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is recommended for gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBM) to prevent cancers and warts linked to the HPV virus.
- We wanted to understand what factors prevent GBM from getting the vaccine.

HOW DID WE RESEARCH THIS?

- 2,433 cis and trans GBM from Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver answered questions on their knowledge of the HPV vaccine, whether they had received the vaccine, and their sexual health.
- We categorized guys based on the stage of vaccine uptake they were in, ranging across unawareness of the vaccine, unwillingness or willingness to get vaccinated, and having been vaccinated already.
- Then, we compared the characteristics of guys in earlier stages to guys who had already gotten their first dose of the HPV vaccine.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

- Across the three cities, 26–40% of guys didn't know about the HPV vaccine, 7–14% were undecided or unwilling to get vaccinated, 33–39% were willing to get vaccinated, and 13–28% had gotten vaccinated.
- Compared to gay guys, bisexual guys and guys who kept their same-sex relationships private were less likely to be aware of the vaccine. Guys who identified as queer were more likely than gay guys to be vaccinated already.
- Compared to guys who were born in Canada, guys who immigrated to Canada were less likely to be aware of the vaccine.
- Guys who didn't have access to a healthcare provider or recent sexual health information were more likely to be undecided or unwilling to get vaccinated. Guys who didn't have access to recent sexual health information were also less likely to be aware of the vaccine.
- Guys who were vaccinated against hepatitis A or B were more likely to be vaccinated against HPV already.
- In Vancouver and Montreal, guys under 27 were more likely to be aware of the vaccine compared to guys 27+.



HPV vaccine: A 3-dose vaccine that prevents cancers of the anus, cervix, head and neck as well as warts on the anus or genitals.



Vaccine Coverage: In BC, Ontario and Quebec, the HPV vaccine has been free for GBM under 27 since 2016. For men 27 and older, it costs about \$200 per dose (over \$600 total) but is covered by some private health insurance plans.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE FINDINGS?

- To receive a free HPV vaccine in BC, Ontario and Quebec, GBM must be out to their healthcare provider. Healthcare providers can increase vaccine awareness by helping guys feel comfortable sharing their sexual orientation. This is especially important for bisexual and immigrant GBM, as well as guys who usually keep their same sex relationships private. These groups tend to be less aware of the vaccine.
- Making sure GBM have access to healthcare providers and sexual health information may increase their chances of getting vaccinated.
- Bundling vaccination with sexual health services has helped GBM access the HPV vaccine outside of Canada. Offering HPV vaccination while administering other vaccines can help healthcare providers better protect guys from HPV-related cancers.
- GBM 27 and older were less aware of the vaccine. The vaccine's high cost may be preventing healthcare providers from discussing HPV vaccination with older guys.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Ann Burchell, University of Toronto, **email:** ann.burchell@unityhealth.to

