



HPV Advances: A Patient Education Program

Prevention of HPV-Related Head and Neck Cancer

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And this has been a remarkable story that's unfolded during my career. The incidence to this cancer has been epidemic; really rapidly increasing. And it's been the most common cancer caused by HPV in the United States since 2009, and that's more than cervical cancer — the cancer most people think about when they think about HPV-associated cancers. And this is even more remarkable because in the year 2000, this was almost unheard of. So, the growth of this cancer incidence has been remarkable. In 2016, about 40% of all the head and neck cancers in the oropharynx were HPV-associated cancer, and it's the second most rapidly increasing cancer in solid tumour type, effective in about 30% of all head and neck cancers, and it is expected to be about 50% in the year 2030. So, it's really taking over head and neck cancer. Fortunately, these tumours have a relatively good cure rate compared to HPV-negative cancers, and almost all are preventable. And that's a big topic I want to stress today, is there is a vaccine that prevents this cancer. It's the HPV vaccine. I know vaccine may be a dirty word to some people, but this is vaccine that prevents cancer. And it can almost wipe out this disease if people get vaccinated. It's FDA-approved, its CDC-recommended for males and females younger than age 26. It covers nine types of HPV, but the one we really care about is type 16 because that's the one that causes the vast majority of these tumours. And people can receive this vaccine up to age 46. And as I said before, don't forget, HPV-positive head and neck cancer. If you look at the demographics right now, about four of ten adolescent boys have started the vaccine series, and about six of ten girls. We really need to increase this rate in males and females. And particularly in males for head and neck cancer because males outnumber females in this cancer type. And HPV is so common, with one opposite sex partner, the chance of being exposed in 91% for men and 84% for women. So I really encourage people to get vaccinated. If you know somebody younger than 26, or younger than 46, encourage them to get this vaccine to prevent HPV-associated head and neck cancer.