

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to assess the knowledge level and attitude about HPV vaccines as related to cervical cancer amongst female undergraduate students in two universities in Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University and Rangsit University. Two hundred respondents aged between 18-25 were asked to complete the questionnaire. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 14 was used to describe the results of this study in terms of frequency and percentage.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

5.2.1 General Information of Respondents

The respondents were 200 female undergraduate students of various ages, faculties, years of study, personal allowances, vaccination history, levels of knowledge about HPV, and sources of HPV knowledge. Forty-eight percent of the respondents received a monthly allowance less than or equal to 5,000 Baht, 44.5% received 5,001-10,000 Baht, 65% had previously received other vaccines; on the other hand, 35% had never received vaccines. 44.5% of the respondents had heard about HPV vaccines while 55.5% heard about HPV vaccines from this survey.

5.2.2 Knowledge of HPV Vaccines as Related to Cervical Cancer

Twenty seven percent of the respondents chose the right answers on 9 -10 questions; on the other hand, 12% chose the right answers on only 3-5 questions. Most respondents (61%) chose the right answers on 6-8 questions. In terms of the 10 knowledge questions, the question asking for the abbreviation of HPV showed that 93.5% of the respondents knew what HPV stands for. 83-86.5% had knowledge about the fact that cervical cancer is the most frequent cancer occurring among Thai women that cervical cancer can be prevented, and that HPV types 16 and 18 can lead to cervical cancer. Moreover, 67.5% of respondents knew that they were in the age range that could receive HPV vaccines.

5.2.3 Attitudes about HPV Vaccines as Related to Cervical Cancer

5.2.3.1 The beliefs of HPV vaccines in the prevention of HPV infections causing cervical cancer

The results of the beliefs about HPV vaccines showed that 40-45% of respondents believed that HPV vaccines can prevent HPV infection, and will recommend that their relatives or friends receive HPV vaccines. According to the results of question 8 and 13, 42.5-45.5% of the respondents were not sure whether HPV vaccines provide total protection from HPV infection.

5.2.3.2 Attitudes towards being vaccinated

36% of the respondents were uncomfortable about receiving injections, or were not sure whether they would feel comfortable (38.5%).

5.2.3.3 Attitude about the expenses of HPV vaccination and willingness to pay.

23% of the respondents could pay for the cost of HPV vaccines and 40.5% could not pay, while 36.5% were not sure that they could afford the entire cost of the HPV vaccines. In addition, 89.5% of respondents agreed that the government should provide information and cover the costs of HPV vaccinations, and 88.5% of respondents would be interested in receiving information/ vaccinations.

5.2.4 Additional Opinions of Respondents

Many respondents expressed their opinions on the surveys, and 56 respondents stated that the expenses of the HPV vaccines were quite high and should be provided by the government. 36 respondents stated that they would like the Ministry of Health to promote knowledge about HPV vaccines to Thai females especially teenagers, to prevent infections.

All of opinions can be categorized as follows:

- 36 respondents said that they would like the Ministry of Health to promote knowledge about HPV vaccines to Thai females especially teenagers, for the early prevention.
- 32 respondents suggested that the government should provide free HPV vaccinations.
- 24 respondents felt that the cost of HPV vaccines was quite expensive.

- 4 respondents felt that this survey could help the respondents to become aware of the risk of HPV infection.

5.3 DISCUSSION

5.3.1 Knowledge Level about HPV Vaccines as Related to Cervical Cancer

In terms of knowledge level of HPV vaccines as related to cervical cancer, women should have knowledge about this issue as it is directly related to them. In contrast, Jasmine S.A. (2007) found that 40% of women aged between 18 to 75 years old had heard about HPV, and less than 50% knew that HPV infection caused cervical cancer. According to the study of Eva et al (2002), 37% of respondents had heard about HPV; in contrast, they found a high prevalence of HPV among young adults, and that most students had in accurate information about the infection. The survey of Lambert (2002) evaluated the effectiveness of a brief HPV-focused, educational intervention on college students' knowledge of HPV. The results showed that only 45% of the HPV questions were answered correctly. After the intervention, 79% of the HPV questions were answered appropriately. In Thailand, Nganwai et al (2005) studied knowledge, attitudes and practices vis-à-vis cervical cancer among registered nurses at the Faculty of Medicine, and discovered that the respondents who were working in the hospital had a moderate level of knowledge regarding cervical cancer and HPV.

The results of this study revealed that only 44.5% of respondents had heard about HPV, and 57% of the respondents knew that HPV infection can cause cervical cancer within 10 years. Moreover, 81.5% of the respondents knew that HPV vaccines are now available in Thailand.

5.3.2 Attitude of HPV Vaccines towards Cervical Cancer

Jessica P. (2008) studied the attitudes and intention to receive an HPV vaccine, including rates of vaccinations, in young women, between 18 to 30 years old. Although Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccines are frequently researched, little is known about attitudes regarding vaccinations. The results showed that 5% of respondents had received at least one HPV vaccine dose, 66% intended to receive the vaccine, 65% were confident they could find the time to get vaccinated, 54% believed

that they could receive all three shots, and 42% believed that they could afford the vaccinations. Interventions that aim to increase intention and the belief in one's ability to receive HPV vaccines (which may lead to higher vaccination rates) should address personal beliefs about vaccination as well as systemic barriers to vaccination.

The results of the study showed that 40-45% of respondents believed that HPV vaccines can prevent HPV infection, and they would recommend that relatives or friends receive HPV vaccines. According to the results, 42.5-45.5% of the respondents were not sure that HPV vaccines provided total protection from HPV infection. The results also showed that the respondents were concerned about the effectiveness of HPV vaccines.

In terms of the cost of HPV vaccines, the results of this study showed that 23.0% of the respondents could pay for the cost of HPV vaccines and 40.5% could not pay, while 36.5% were not sure that they could afford the entire cost of HPV vaccines. In contrast to the study of Jessica (2008), 42% believed that they could afford the cost of vaccination. In addition, 89.5% of respondents agreed that the government should provide information and cover the costs of HPV vaccinations, and 88.5% of respondents would be interested in receiving information/ vaccinations.

5.4 CONCLUSION

According to the discussion of this study of 200 Thai female undergraduate students at Chulalongkorn University and Rangsit University, the respondents had the knowledge at the medium level as shown by correctly answering 6-8 questions. In addition, almost half of the respondents had heard about HPV, and knew about the prevalence of cervical cancer as related to HPV infection.

Concerning the cost of HPV injections, 88.5% of the respondents thought that the government should pay for the vaccines, and they were willing to join the campaign despite concerns about the effectiveness and side effects.

In general, the results demonstrated a medium level of HPV knowledge held by the respondents, they also wanted the proper knowledge of HPV to be available, and to be able to consult with experts about HPV vaccines and cervical cancer.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research:

5.5.1 Due to the limited study period, most of the respondents had the same educational background and the number of faculties was insufficient to represent all the knowledge levels or attitudes of each faculty.

5.5.2 Further study should look at women who have never heard about HPV or those who need more accurate information.

5.5.3 Future research should consider a population in a remote area where HPV knowledge is not easily accessible.

5.5.4 Further study should focus on additional opinions and expand the research to a larger number of respondents in order to create health awareness among Thai females and lessen the prevalence of cervical cancer in the near future.