

NEWS AND VIEWS

HPV-Associated Cancers Increased in 2008-2012

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a known cause of cervical cancers, as well as some vulvar, vaginal, penile, oropharyngeal, anal, and rectal cancers. Recently, CDC analyzed data from population-based cancer registries that participate in the CDC's National Program of Cancer Registries and the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results program and met the criteria for high data quality for all years 2008-2012, covering approximately 99% of the U.S. population. It was estimated that approximately 30,700 new cancers were attributable to HPV, including 19,200 among females and 11,600 among males. Compared with a previous analysis, which reported 33,369 HPV-associated cancer cases diagnosed each year during 2004-2008, the results of this analysis demonstrate an overall increase in HPV-associated cancer incidence, from 10.8 per 100,000 persons during 2004-2008 to 11.7 per 100,000 persons during 2008-2012, despite a slight decrease in the rate of cervical carcinoma. Part of this increase is because of the inclusion of additional subsites for oropharyngeal cancer; however, the increase persisted when these subsites were excluded from analysis.

This topic is important because most cervical cancers are preventable with regular screening for precancerous lesions among women aged 21-65 years linked with follow-up for abnormal test results. Ongoing surveillance for HPV-associated cancers using high-quality population-based registries is needed to monitor trends in cancer incidence that might result from increasing use of HPV vaccines and changes in cervical cancer screening practices.

Absence of a Parent in Early Childhood Linked to Drinking and Smoking as Preteen

It is well known that children with an absent parent because of demise or estrangement are at greater risk for developing bad lifestyle habits like drinking alcohol and. In a recent study that was reported in *Journal of Archives of Diseases of Childhood*, Rebecca Lacey and colleagues periodically surveyed the families of nearly 11,000 children

in the U.K. (when the children were aged 9 months through 11 years). The idea was to examine whether early parental absence was associated with smoking and drinking alcohol before adolescence. It was found that parental absence before age 7 was associated with a 54% increased risk for smoking. Similarly, the parental absence was associated a 27% increased risk for drinking alcohol by age 11. The authors did not report any difference in risky behaviours based on whether mother or father was absent or the child's age at absence. "Understanding the impact of specific adverse childhood experiences is key to addressing them effectively at all levels (e.g., policy, public health, clinical)," comments Dr. John Cowden. Although this study did not examine how parental absence might lead to childhood substance use, it is valuable to know that increased risk appears very early in a child's life, says Dr. Cowden. Implications of this study are that clinicians should be aware that it is never too early to discuss substance use with parents and children, and that particular attention should be paid to families with an absent parent.

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