

## AB077. 138. Human papillomavirus-associated head and neck cancer: a 21st century pandemic; assessing student awareness and knowledge

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**Background:** Our aim was to investigate the level of awareness within a high risk, relevant cohort of university students surrounding head and neck cancer (HNC), human papillomavirus (HPV) and the link between the two conditions. This is particularly relevant considering the increasing HPV-related HNC which is expected to surpass the incidence of cervical cancer by 2020.

**Methods:** An anonymous, closed questionnaire-based survey of all the registered students of the National University of Ireland, Galway (population circa 17,000) was

distributed using a survey provider platform.

**Results:** A total of 1,582 responded, 1,468 completed the questionnaire; 68% female and 32% male. Age range 17–64. Sixty-three percent had never heard the term HNC. Forty-five percent had never heard the term HPV. Sixty-nine percent were not aware of how one would be exposed to HPV. Eighty-four percent were unaware of the association between HNC and HPV. Although 94% of females were familiar with the vaccine, only 50% knew the vaccine was protective against HPV. Seventy-eight percent of participants were not aware that the vaccine would be of benefit to males. Eighty-four percent of male respondents would be open to being vaccinated.

**Conclusions:** There is a profound knowledge gap in this high-risk cohort of students and it is imperative that a national campaign is implemented to raise the profile of HNC and HPV and its risk factors in Ireland, given the current lack of awareness.

**Keywords:** Human papillomavirus (HPV); head and neck cancer (HNC); public awareness; human papillomavirus vaccine (HPV vaccine); survey; students

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