

Please note – This is an extract from a student’s response for one of three articles

The article is the Ministry of Health’s School consent form: *‘HPV Vaccine (Human Papillomavirus Vaccine) A vaccine to help prevent cervical cancer.’*

3 This article was written by the NZ Ministry of Health.

The purpose is to give information about the HPV virus to parents of year eight girls, to ask for their consent to immunise their child for free. The form and other information are available to the general public; however, the intended audience is the year eight girls and their parents in New Zealand. The information is about the HPV virus and receiving the vaccine Gardasil.

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One biological feature is, *“Cervical Cancer develops when HPV infections don't clear and cause abnormal cells to grow on the cervix. If these cells go undetected and untreated they can lead to cervical cancer.”*

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This is accurate, because when someone has sexual contact with someone who is a carrier of HPV, the virus invades cells in the cervix of the vagina and reproduces within them. If this process is allowed to continue over a long period of time, this can lead to cervical cancer. The cells are found near the surface of the cervix. As they mature the virus escapes.

1 The HPV virus goes through different stages. Sometimes, only a few cells are changed and sometimes they clear up on their own. This can be checked in a regular Smear or Pap test.

When it is severely abnormal and not checked up on early enough, then this can cause death.

Another biological feature is, *“The vaccine causes the immune system to produce its own protection against four HPV types.”*

1

This is accurate because the Gardasil vaccine is a weakened vaccine. The antigen in the vaccine is the protein of HPV, produced by using DNA technology. The proteins change into low risk virus-like particles. That means that it has antigens in it that stimulate the immune system to produce antibodies against it. Antibodies are proteins produced by the body’s immune system. They attach to an antigen to let special cells destroy the antigen. This also happens when we get sick, like a cold and the flu.

There are some people that cannot become immune because of vaccine failures. These people are not safe to the virus if they are sexually active. They rely on community immunity to reduce the risk of HPV infection

2 The vested interest of this consent form is the Ministry of Health, as they want to to improve, promote and protect the health of all New Zealanders.

They are offering the free vaccination because they want to help protect these young girls from any type of HPV infection that may lead to most cervical cancers and genital warts.

From the articles I read there are two sides to the story when using Gardasil. The ones that present the true facts are the best, even when they talk about side effects. Sometimes the information is too hard for people to understand because of the science information in them. The best ones use diagrams to show how the vaccine works.

The consent form is very technical in parts and the parents would need to read up on more sides of the issue to be well informed. If the article had invalid information this may mislead readers into making life changing decisions which they may regret.

I think the Ministry of Health should make the vaccine available to more than one year level at school in case children were not vaccinated when they were in year 8. If they made it available to both year 8 and 9 and maybe even year 10 it would be safer for the community.