

## Knowledge and Attitude about Human Papilloma Virus, Vaccination and Pap-Test among Female Undergraduates of University of Ruhuna

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**Background:** Increasing awareness and establishing positive attitudes among young women population on Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), prevention with vaccination and Pap test plays a major role in taking preventive measures, early diagnosis and appropriate management to reduce the burden of cervical cancer.

**Objectives:** To assess the level of knowledge and attitudes regarding HPV, HPV vaccination and Pap test among female undergraduates of University of Ruhuna (UOR), Sri Lanka

**Methodology:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out with randomly selected 400 female undergraduates of UOR. Eighty undergraduates were selected from each five Faculties; Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences (FAHS), Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Management and Finance and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the UOR. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire including questions on knowledge and statements on attitudes related to HPV.

**Results:** Out of 400 female undergraduates, 44.8% (n = 179) knew that cervical cancer is common in Sri Lanka. Majority, 71.5% (n = 286) knew that cervical cancer is caused by HPV. Most of the undergraduates (63.2%, n = 253) knew about the vaccination against HPV. Majority, (58.8%, n = 235) knew regarding pap-test. The mean ( $\pm$ SD) knowledge score was 18.49 ( $\pm$ 11.97). About 38.3% (n = 153) had high, 30% (n = 120) had moderate and 31.8% (n = 127) had low level of knowledge. Overall knowledge was associated with age ( $p < 0.001$ ), ethnicity ( $p = 0.04$ ), faculty ( $p < 0.001$ ) and year of study ( $p < 0.001$ ). Knowledge was significantly higher among female undergraduates who were below 23 years of age in third and final year in the Faculty of Medicine and FAHS ( $p < 0.05$ ). Majority, (51.2%, n = 205) had positive attitudes while 48.8% (n = 195) undergraduates had negative attitudes towards HPV.

**Conclusions:** Inadequate knowledge and positive attitude regarding HPV, HPV vaccination and Pap test was identified among the female undergraduates of the UOR. The knowledge was related to the age, ethnicity, faculty and year of study. Health education programmes regarding HPV could be important for enhancing the awareness of female undergraduates.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Female undergraduates, Human papilloma virus, Knowledge, University of Ruhuna