


KNOWLEDGE OF THE HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS IN FIRST-YEAR DENTAL STUDENTS (2021-2024)

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ABSTRACT

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a boom issue at the social level and in health policies. Different cultures mark different ways of dealing with epidemic endemics, in which macro and micro decisions are relevant. Objective: To observe whether students entering the first year of their dental career present knowledge about HPV. Material and method: Descriptive, observational, and cross-sectional study. The Questionnaire "Degree of knowledge about various aspects of the human papillomavirus in students of the Faculty" validated by Elena Cabello Fernández (2006, Spain) was carried out on first-year students of the Dentistry Career of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Catholic University of Cordoba. Approved by CIEIS of the UCC-RF. Results: Alarming, throughout these four years of study, it was observed that the percentage of students with knowledge of HPV transmission never reached 70%. Approximately 30% who were unaware of the transmission of the virus showed agreement with those who lacked information about the vaccine and did not use protection in sexual relations. The average of unvaccinated students (2021-2024) is 27%, of these, 53% were unaware of the existence of the mandatory vaccine since 2011. The year-on-year average shows that 23% did not use condoms, with 2023 being the highest percentage with 31.9%. 16 years was the average age of the first sexual intercourse that was maintained in the four samples. Conclusions: The knowledge about HPV with which students enter the Faculty is deficient and confusing. There are good health policies from the Ministry of Health, but little or poorly disseminated and implemented.

Key words: Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Knowledge in Dental Students. Prevention in Oral Health.

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INTRODUCTION

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is a boom issue at the social level and in health policies. Different cultures mark different ways of dealing with epidemic endemics, in which macro and micro decisions are relevant. HPV has become a scourge for Argentina, especially for the age group of adolescents, young people, and young adults. It became so important that vaccination against these viruses, both for men and women, does not require a doctor's order and is free in all vaccination centers, public hospitals, and health centers in the country. In Argentina, 1800 women die every year from cervical cancer. The cause of this disease, as well as other cancers, is HPV. It is for this reason that in the Argentine Republic, there is Resolution 563/2011 of the Ministry of Health that establishes in the National Program for the Control of Immunopreventable Diseases, free of charge and mandatory, the possibility of vaccination against HPV. This provides immunization through HPV vaccination to all eleven-year-old girls (Buenos Aires, 10/5/2011) and all boys born since 2006 by modification of Resolution 1977/2016 of the Ministry of Health 9/11/2016.

Oral HPV, especially strain 16, can facilitate the appearance of oral cancer, especially on the floor of the mouth. Lesions can appear in any location of the oral mucosa, including in the gingival area. As HPV-16 and other varieties associated with oropharyngeal cancer become more prevalent, the frequency of these cancers increases. According to PAHO, cancers of the oral cavity and oropharynx are among the most common cancers around the world, with an estimated 443,000 cases and 241,000 deaths. Although individuals with HPV-associated oral cancers tend to have better prognoses than individuals with non-HPV-related oral cancer, HPV-related cancer is more likely to develop in people without traditional risk factors, such as tobacco and alcohol use. That is why multiple questionnaires and surveys have been prepared to elucidate the situation and thus know the starting point to achieve the objectives set. It is a moral and ethical obligation to raise awareness among future health professionals about this health topic that can affect them and their patients.

OBJECTIVE

To observe whether students entering the first year of the dental career present knowledge about HPV.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

This was a descriptive, observational, and cross-sectional study. It was carried out on first-year students of the Dentistry Career of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Catholic University of Córdoba. The questionnaires were answered anonymously and voluntarily. Before completing the questionnaire, the participant signed the model informed consent form of the Catholic University of Córdoba, where the specific purposes of the study and compliance with the standards of the World Medical Association were detailed. The confidentiality of the data was guaranteed. This work is approved by CIEIS of the UCC-RF. It was held at the beginning of the school year, for 4 consecutive years (2021-2024). The instrument was the Questionnaire "Degree of knowledge about various aspects of the human papillomavirus in students of the Faculty", validated by Elena Cabello Fernández (2006, Spain). Knowledge of this disease was determined by the rating scale according to correct answers and the number of questions.

RESULTS

Alarmingly, throughout these four years of study, it was observed that the percentage of students with knowledge of HPV transmission never reached 70%. Approximately 30% who were unaware of the transmission of the virus showed agreement with those who lacked information about the vaccine and did not use protection in sexual relations. The average of unvaccinated students (2021-2024) is 27%, of these, 53% were unaware of the existence of the mandatory vaccine since 2011. The year-on-year average shows that 23% did not use condoms, with 2023 being the highest percentage with 31.9%. 16 years was the average age of the first sexual intercourse that was maintained in the four samples.

Graph 1: HPV Knowledge Analysis

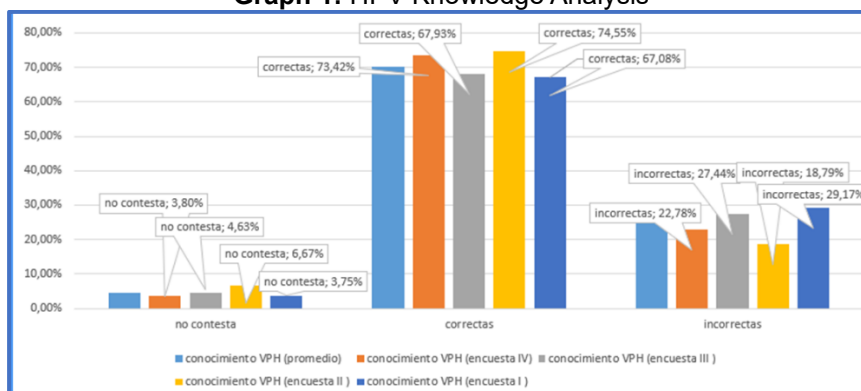


Figure 2: Knowledge about HPV Transmission

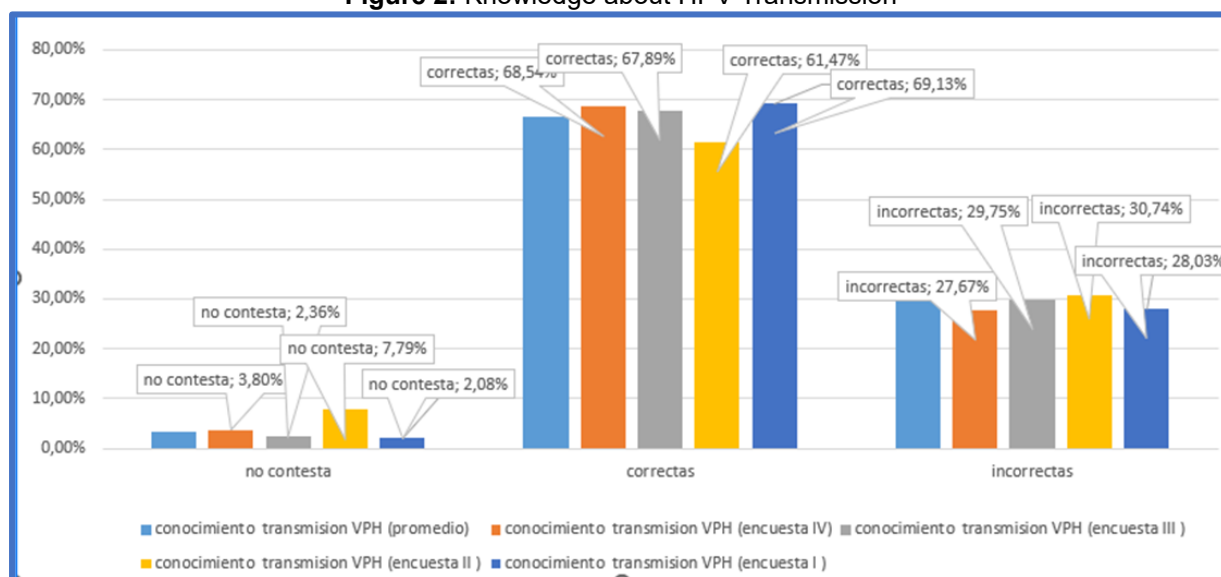
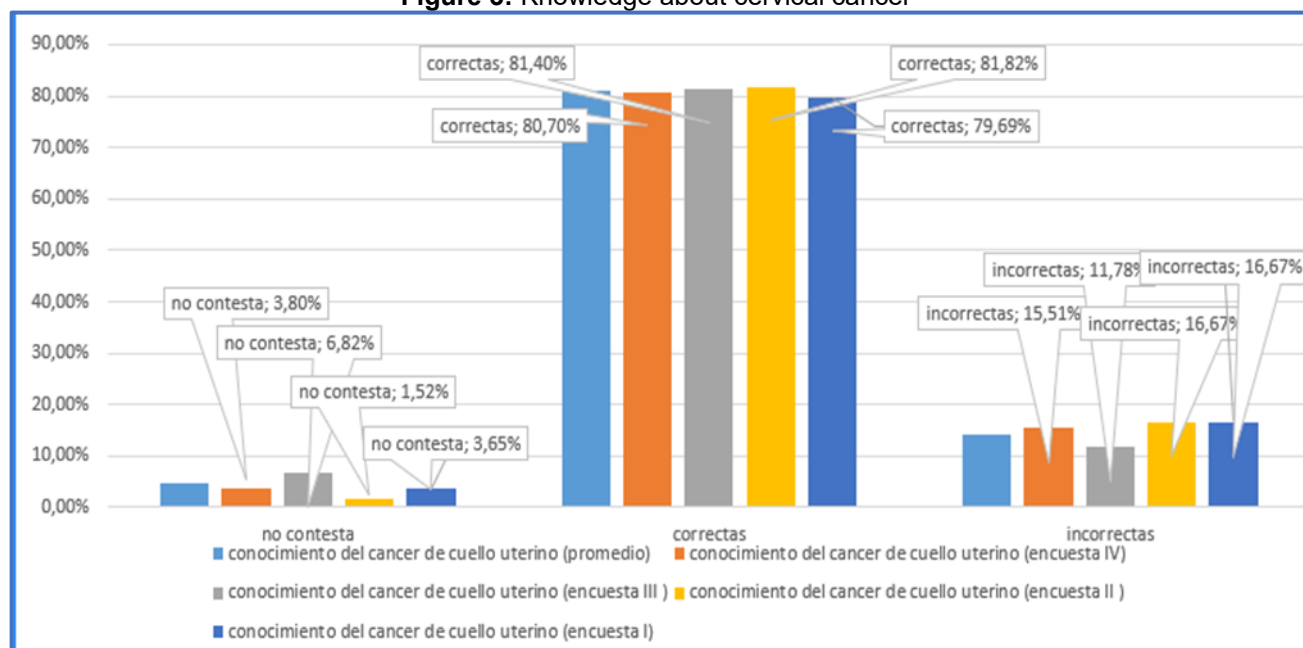


Figure 3: Knowledge about cervical cancer



Graph 4: Knowledge about the Pap smear

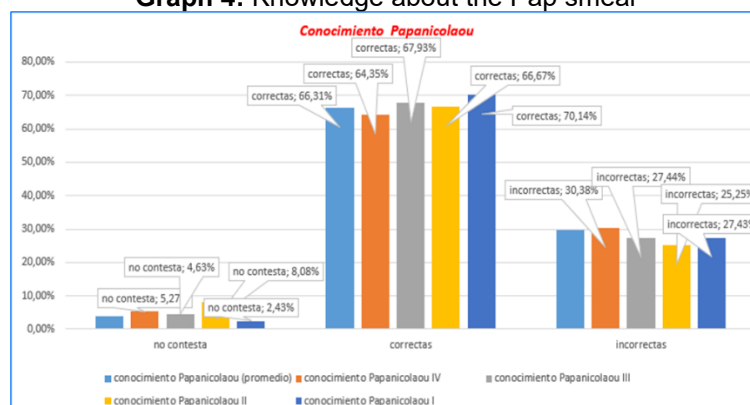
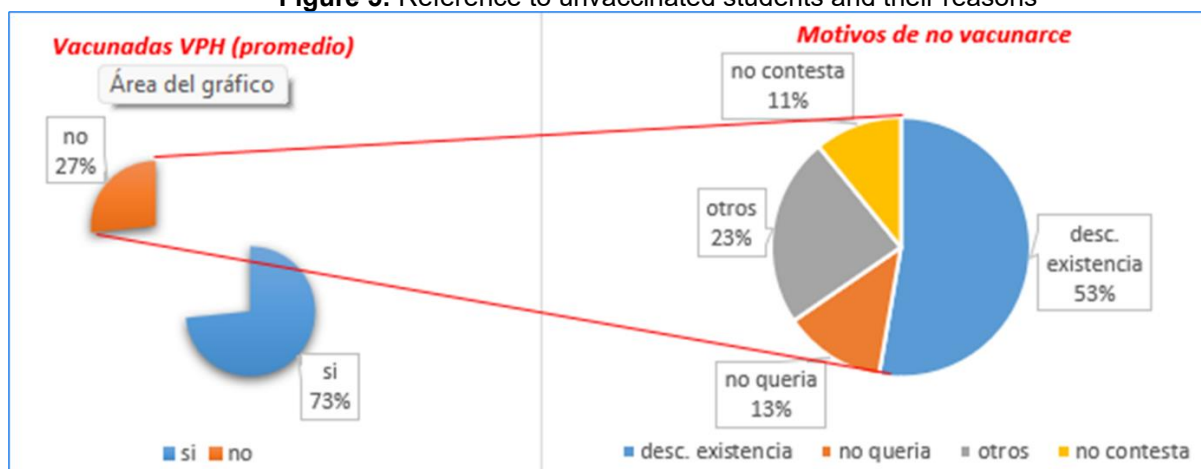


Figure 5: Reference to unvaccinated students and their reasons



CONCLUSIONS

- The knowledge about HPV with which students enter the Faculty is deficient and confusing.
- There are good health policies from the Ministry of Health, but little or poorly disseminated and implemented.
- Students are health and health advertising agents, it is important that they know and understand such relevant topics.

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