

HPV VACCINE APPLICATION IN THE CITIES OF VLORA AND FIER

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Background: Cervical cancer is the second most common type of cancer among women in Albania. This cancer has great potential for prevention, with health interventions resulting in the gain of several healthy years of life. One of the most effective methods of preventing cervical cancer is to vaccinate girls before starting sexual activity. That's why the application of HPV vaccine is a crucial intervention of public health for preventing and controlling the cervical cancer and also other HPV infections. In Albania, the vaccine against HPV has become part of the children's vaccination calendar, free of charge, since November 2022. The application of this vaccine aims to include all girls born since January 2009, thus targeting girls at the age of 13.

Methods and Objectives: This study aims to assess the HPV vaccination coverage rates in the cities of Vlora and Fier throughout 2023. It is an epidemiological cross-sectional study utilizing data obtained from the databases of The Regional Directorate of the Health Care Services Operator.

Results: The analysis of data from 2023 shows that 537 girls in Vlora were scheduled for HPV vaccination, with 297 receiving it. In Fier, out of 887 girls scheduled, 501 were vaccinated. The vaccination coverage for the HPV vaccine reaches the value of 55% for the city of Vlora and 56% for the Fier.

Conclusions: This study concludes that the HPV vaccine uptake is not at high levels, highlighting the importance of conducting further research to identify factors that hinder the implementation of the HPV vaccination program.

Keywords: HPV, cervical cancer, vaccination, public health, girls, vaccination coverage