

ARE WE READY TO VACCINATE YOUNG PEOPLE UP TO THE AGE OF 26 WITH THE HPV VACCINE?

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Background: According to the Expert Methodological Guide for the Implementation of Mandatory and Recommended Immunization of the Population for 2024, active immunization against diseases caused by human papillomaviruses (HPV) is recommended for children aged 9 to 19, and persons aged 19 to 26 can be immunized.

Objectives and Methods: Increase the number of vaccinated young people against HPV, through examples of good practice in the student community.

Results: Through preventive activities organized for the Students' Day on April 4, and initiative to enable free immunization against HPV during April 2024, vaccination was performed in all Institutes for the student healthcare in Serbia. Information was shared through social media. The greatest interest came from Belgrade students, a total of 3014 doses were given. Significantly more vaccines were given in the group aged 23-26 (73%) than in the group aged 19-22. In relation to gender, statistically significantly more female received the vaccine (78%) than male (22%).

Conclusions: The huge interest of young people shows that there is an awareness of the importance of HPV vaccination. Young people are more familiar with sexually transmitted infections, accept responsibility for their decisions, and understand the importance of prevention. Free vaccination against HPV infection should be provided to all young people up to the age of 26.

Keywords: HPV vaccine, students, youth