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"Free HPV Vaccination after 18?, a Qualitative Study on Awareness of University Students about HPV Infection and Vaccination Policy in Turkey"

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Human papillomavirus (HPV) is one of the viruses found in humans, and has many species. HPV infection can cause genital warts or some types of cancer in humans, such as cervical, anus, penis, vulva, vagina, and head and neck cancer.

HPV vaccine has been a heated debate in Turkey recently. Citizens and associations have conducted a free HPV vaccination campaign for everyone for two years. As a result of these efforts, the Ministry of Health announced that the HPV vaccine would be included in the national vaccination calendar in consideration with the marital status and over the age of 18 in December 2022. However, WHO recommends that vaccination can be started girls aged 9-14 years before starting sexual activity. This has caused a bioethical, socio-political conflict in the issue. Thus, this declaration of Ministry has aroused a public debate targeting an amendment in the draft policy.

This qualitative study aims to investigate the awareness, opinion, experiences, prevention methods of students of Acıbadem University in Istanbul regarding the HPV. By conducting this study, we intend to contribute the relevant literature to better serve health policies and health coverage from an evidence- based perspective in line with accountability, equity, and social responsibility.

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