

The Funny Thing About Cancer: Amy's Story

Background: The human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) worldwide with over 70% of infected females contracting cervical cancer. The number of reported cases has increased exponentially during the past decade and accounts for many preventable STIs and cancers. It is estimated that about 79 million Americans are currently infected with HPV and 14 million people will become newly infected each year. Many of these cases are potentially preventable by vaccination. Therefore, it is important to understand the infection process, surveillance and diagnosis, and the need for vaccination as a form of prevention.

Methods: A description of the case, description of the population, risk factors, transmission, natural history, and symptomology will be discussed. In addition, the efficacy of the vaccination and the role of the community health network will be discussed.

Results: The key to successful prevention of HPV infection is increasing public awareness and acceptance of the vaccine. There are many factors which influence the decision to vaccinate including perceived susceptibility to HPV transmission, understanding the benefits of vaccination, and barriers to vaccination series completion

Conclusion: Routine vaccination of both boys and girls would reduce the HPV infection and possibly eradicate it. It is essential for individuals to have yearly screenings for HPV by their healthcare provider. It is also important for healthcare providers to raise awareness of the need for vaccination and to provide educational materials concerning the vaccine to their patients.