

Promising strategies to increase HPV vaccination rates in Germany - Current situation, challenges and opportunities

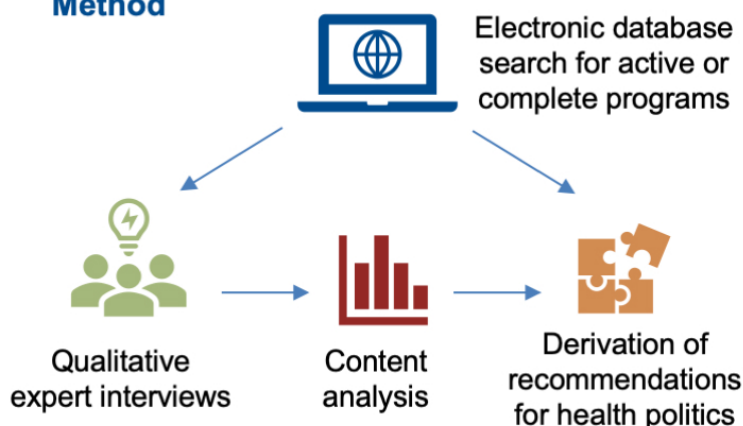
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Research for a Life without Cancer

Background

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination rate in Germany remains low with a countrywide coverage of 43% among 15 years old girls in 2018¹. We report preliminary results from a study which aims at describing the landscape of interventions/projects to increase HPV vaccination rates as at providing data on opportunities and challenges.

Method



Preliminary Results

We tracked 47 projects that were implemented over the period from 2007 to 2019 in Germany and interviewed 44 experts: 30% representatives of health insurances, research and politics, 24% of professional associations and non profit institutions, 20% of health professionals, 14% of multipliers (e.g. teachers) and 12% representatives of other institutions.

Current status: The number of active projects in Germany increased over the years (Fig. 1).

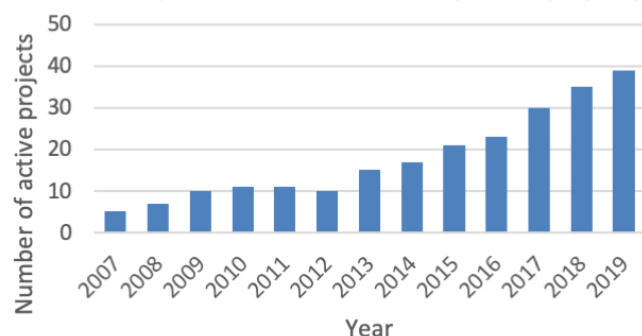


Fig. 1: Number of active projects per year (2007-2019)

The projects were mainly educational projects (67,6%) or information campaigns (20,6%). Schools (61%) and internet (22%) represent the most frequent project settings. A large proportion (43%) of the projects were implemented countrywide and they targeted mainly children/adolescents (54%) and parents (30%).

Tendencies of the expert interviews:

The experts mentioned a range of promising strategies to increase HPV vaccination coverage:

- School vaccination programs would effectively improve HPV vaccination rates in Germany.
- Social media is an important tool to raise awareness for HPV vaccination.
- “Reminder and Recall” systems targeting both providers and recipients seem promising.
- *“I think this [social media] and school vaccination programs are most promising approaches.”* – (rep. of other institution)

The experts also mentioned a range of challenges in increasing HPV vaccination coverage:

- School vaccination programs are not perceived to be a realistic option (e.g. due to shortage of public health staff).
- *“I believe there is a need to better link the different stakeholders in this field.”* – (rep. of non profit organisation)
- *“I think education is deficient within all target groups, actually.”* – (health professional).
- *“Everyone seems to be reinventing the wheel”* – (rep. of non profit organisation).
- Supply shortages of Gardasil-9 (vaccine) hamper extension of vaccination coverage.

Conclusion

When completed, this project will provide insights which can inform health policies to effectively increase HPV vaccination rates in Germany.