

Vaccine against cancer

Written by PHILIP S. CHUA, M.D., FACS, FPCS
Thursday, 03 November 2011 20:21



ON Nov. 7, 2005, we introduced our readers to a revolutionary and soon-to-be-released vaccine that was found to be effective in preventing cancer of the cervix (mouth of the womb) almost 100 percent.

It was eventually approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in late 2009 and widely available today.

In the United States, about 12,710 new cases of cervical cancer are discovered each year, and about 4,290 of these women die of this malignancy.

Although much rarer, anal, oral and penile cancers, like cervical cancer and cancer of the vagina and vulva, are caused by human papilloma virus (HPV).

The wonder vaccine is Gardasil (Merck) in the United States and the other one is Cervarix (GlaxoSmithKline) in Europe.

Vaccine against cancer

Written by PHILIP S. CHUA, M.D., FACS, FPCS
Thursday, 03 November 2011 20:21

The vaccine is recommended for young girls (9-26) before they become sexually active.

The objective is to prevent them from getting HPV and spreading the virus to future sexual partner(s).

Since boys are part of the health equation, the question is whether to give the vaccine to the boys of the same age, in order to completely break the cycle of HPV infection.

In view of new studies that suggest the vaccine might be effective for other forms of cancers, the idea of giving the shots to boys also became more attractive.

The U.S. FDA in December 2010 approved the vaccine for boys of the same age group.

Actually, while it reduces the risk of developing non-cancerous genital warts, penile and anal cancers from HPV, these diseases are much rarer than cancer of the cervix among women.

While the benefits for the girls are overwhelmingly clear, the uncertainty that the vaccine will benefit their sons and the high cost of the vaccine are causing mothers to be reluctant to submit their sons to this vaccination campaign.

“If all we did was prevent genital warts, that would be cause for celebration,” said Dr. Joel Palefsky, an infectious disease specialist at the University of California, San Francisco.

Indeed, that alone would be a great benefit.

It has been difficult to convince parents to have their daughters, much less their sons, to have the (almost \$400) vaccine, but recent studies suggesting the same vaccine could protect against other forms of cancer, may change all that.

Vaccine against cancer

Written by PHILIP S. CHUA, M.D., FACS, FPCS
Thursday, 03 November 2011 20:21

In December 2010, the U.S. FDA gave approval for Gardasil for young men, ages 9-26, and expanded the list of indications (uses) for this drug.

The vaccine also protects HPV strains 16 and 18, which have been linked to cancer of the penis, anus and cancer of the throat and tonsils, which the virus can infect through oral sex.

Annually, about 5,820 new cases of anal cancer are discovered, and 3,680 of them are in women.

In general, experts believe that Gardasil, which has been tested in thousands of children, is “as safe as any other vaccine.”

But like other vaccines, it also carries some risk.

Experts have tried to reassure the public that the risk is so small and the benefit of preventing cervical cancer is so great that parents should take advantage of this most effective vaccine.

There is so much misinformation out there that confuses the public, and the eventual victims, innocent young girls, who do not even have a say on the matter, could unnecessarily develop this preventable cancer that could kill them.

Believe it or not, in this day and age, there are still parents, mostly mothers, who refuse routine life-saving vaccines for their children, like immunizations against Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Meningitis, etc.

It is indeed very sad and tragic that some people’s unfounded biases, which could kill their own children by robbing them of their right to have protection from these diseases, are more powerful than our laws today.

Vaccine against cancer

Written by PHILIP S. CHUA, M.D., FACS, FPCS
Thursday, 03 November 2011 20:21

We are worthy of our constitutionally guaranteed freedom of choice only when we make the right one and not the wrong one that will doom our own children to potential killer diseases.

As I have stated in my 800-page book, metaphorically entitled, Let's Stop "Killing" Our Children, which was just released Aug. 25, 2011, the health and life of our children are under our mercy, and anyone of us not contributing to their well-being, health and safety, are contributing to their preventable morbidities and premature mortality.

The onus is on us, parents, and also on society as a whole, including the government.

It would be a boom to the health of people around the world if vaccines for diseases, especially against cancer, were discovered.

However, they would all be useless, and mankind would not be the better for them, if we rejected their use.

Unless we take advantage of the advances in medicine, we will never benefit from them.

As always, it is best to discuss the issue with your physician, who can advise you appropriately on health matters.

Purines bad for gout

About 4 percent of Americans, or 8.3 million, have gout.

Vaccine against cancer

Written by PHILIP S. CHUA, M.D., FACS, FPCS
Thursday, 03 November 2011 20:21

The increase in prevalence has been linked to metabolic syndrome (a group of health conditions: obesity, insulin resistance, hypertension and high cholesterol that may lead to heart attack, diabetes and premature death).

The incidence more doubled in 30 years, from the 1960s to 1990s, possibly linked to people's higher consumption of red meats, and alcohol.

Gout is an inflammation of the joints (arthritis) caused by deposits of uric acid crystals in the joints.

A common misconception is that gout only affects the joints of the toes.

While 90 percent of this is true, 10 percent of gout affects the joints of the fingers, hand, knees, ankles, foot, elbow.

Somehow, the spine appears to be resistant to gout formation.

About 20 percent of gout is genetic.

Some medications, like diuretics (urine pills) and aspirin, contribute to gout.

Diet high in purines (red meats, organ meats, legumes, shellfish, dairy products) also aggravates gout.

Beer and other alcoholic drinks increase uric acid level and induce gout inflammation and pains, which could be debilitating.

Vaccine against cancer

Written by PHILIP S. CHUA, M.D., FACS, FPCS
Thursday, 03 November 2011 20:21

Dehydration contributes to poor kidney function and increases uric acid level.

Drinking plenty of water is good for everyone, especially for persons with gout.

Other good foods for this condition are tofu, nuts, olive oil and diet rich in complex carbohydrates (vegetables, fruits, whole grains) may reduce the symptoms of gout.

Weight control and anti-inflammatory medications prescribed by the physician may be added to the restrictions and recommendation above to control gouty arthritis.

Like dealing with most form of ailments, understanding, wisdom, and discipline are vital to their management.

Please visit www.philipSchua.com

E-mail: scalpelpen@gmail.com