



Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) Evidence Review of Cervical Screening Age

13/03/2009

The Department of Health announced today that a review will be conducted to assess evidence relating to cervical screening age. A panel of experts will review the latest evidence relating to the risks and benefits of cervical screening in women under 25. The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) supports this initiative and looks forward to the results.

In light of population changes and behaviour changes relating to sexual activity, periodic reviews of cervical screening guidelines remain important. Concerns relating to the over-treatment of young women must be balanced against the rare risk of cervical cancer in women under 25. Any strategies to help younger age group patients should be assessed. The RCOG would support the most efficient and effective screening program.

HPV vaccination is an important way to reduce the risk of cervical cancer. The HPV vaccination programme for girls between 12-13 years of age started in September 2008 with a catch-up programme for girls up to 18 years of age commencing later in autumn 2009. The RCOG strongly encourages parents and girls who are of age to take up the offer of the HPV vaccine in order to reduce morbidity and mortality from this preventable cancer.

Regular cervical cytology screening remains an important preventive measure. The NHS Cancer Screening programme has led to a significant reduction in the rate of cervical cancer. The RCOG encourages all women to attend cervical screening when invited, and to ensure that arrangements for regular periodic appointments are made.

Notes

- For more information about the NHS Cervical Cancer Screening Programme, please [click here](#).
- For more information about the HPV vaccination programme, please [visit the NHS Choices website here](#)

Relevant RCOG documents:

- [RCOG Scientific Advisory Committee Opinion Paper No. 7 Progress in cervical screening](#) (January 2006)
- [RCOG Scientific Advisory Committee Opinion Paper No. 9 Vaccination against Cervical Cancer](#) (February 2007)