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Present choices, future outcomes: Anticipated regret and HPV vaccination

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Abstract

Objective

The study examined the role of anticipated regret in human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination decisions as well as potential antecedents of anticipated regret.

Method

In 2007, we interviewed 889 caregivers for girls aged 10–18 in areas of North Carolina with high rates of cervical cancer. The survey assessed vaccination regret (anticipated regret if daughter became more sexually active after vaccination) and inaction regret (anticipated regret if an unvaccinated daughter developed an HPV infection that could lead to cervical cancer). Main outcomes were self-reported vaccination behavior and intentions to vaccinate. Analyses controlled for perceived risk and caregiver and child characteristics.

Results

Caregivers who reported higher vaccination regret were less likely to have gotten their adolescent daughters the HPV vaccine ($OR = .60, p < .001$). Among those who had not yet vaccinated their daughters, higher intentions to vaccinate were associated with higher anticipated inaction regret ($I^2 = .45, p < .001$) and lower vaccination regret ($I^2 = .22, p < .001$). Decision urgency was a significant correlate of both types of regret.

Conclusion

Anticipated regret appears to play an important role in caregivers' decisions to vaccinate adolescent girls against HPV, above and beyond the role played by perceived risk.



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Keywords

Regret; HPV; Vaccination; Adolescent; Cervical cancer

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