

PE1477/G



PE1477 Gender neutral HPV vaccination

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this petition.

Gay Men's Health is Scotland's National Charity for gay and bisexual men. We fully support the extension of the HPV vaccination to boys in Scotland.

Arguments have been made that if 80% of girls are vaccinated then boys will be adequately protected without vaccination. However this protection clearly does not extend to young men who have sex with men (YMSM) and denying vaccination to these young men add to health inequality which we should be striving to eliminate.

Rates of HPV-related disease including anal, penile and throat cancers are higher among men who have sex with men (MSM) and HPV vaccination would provide protection against these diseases.

We note that the BMA has called for vaccination to be extended to young gay men perhaps as an add on for patients vaccinated against Hep B. Whereas we support vaccination for YMSM we believe this would be a less effective alternative to vaccination for all boys as the vaccination should ideally be offered prior to sexual debut and it may be difficult to identify YMSM at age 12 or 13.

In terms of cost-effectiveness, we note that Cancer Research UK believes that "gender neutral HPV vaccination at age 12 – 13 would be shown to be cost-effective if all HPV-related disease were included in the analysis." We believe that these related diseases should be included in the analysis and support Cancer Research UK's call for new cost-effectiveness studies to confirm this belief.

In conclusion, we believe the only effective way to address the current health inequality experienced by young gay men in relation to HPV-related disease and to offer effective protection against genital warts, anal cancer and other HPV-related diseases is to offer vaccination to all boys on the same basis as it is currently offered to girls.

Steve O'Donnell
Testing & Support Manager
Gay Men's Health