

## EDITORIAL

## HPV vaccination in Italy

In 2008, vaccination against HPV was started in various European countries. It is worth pointing out that in Italy this vaccination was introduced into the already-established national program of immunization through an unusual series of consultations and measures:

- On January 11, 2007, the General Direction for Public Health requested the opinion of the Supreme Health Council (Consiglio Superiore di Sanità). The Council advised a national program of vaccination free of charge for 12-year-old girls.
- On February 28, 2007, the Italian Drug Agency (AIFA) introduced the two HPV vaccines authorized in Italy into the group of medicines distributed free of charge by the National Health Service to 12-year-old girls (H-RR category).
- On December 20, 2007, a protocol was agreed upon by the Ministry of Health, the Italian Regions and the

Autonomous Provinces (Strategy for free vaccination against HPV-infection in Italy). The agreement established that the Regions should, through their organizational models, commit themselves to offering HPV vaccination free of charge to 12-year-old girls. It was also agreed that this service could be supplemented by providing for the vaccination of other young females, either free of charge or through co-payment.

The Italian Regions subscribed to the agreement and, through specific deliberations, organized their vaccination campaigns.

The choices made by the Regions are summarized in Table I.

The Regions also chose which of the two authorized vaccines (Gardasil and Cervarix) to administer.

As in other countries, the choice, which involved considerable economic interests, was difficult. Indeed, the

**Tab. I.** HPV vaccination strategies by Italian regions.

Region	Free vaccination with active offer (age class [years])	Free vaccination with not active offer (age class [years])	Co-payment (age class [years])	Vaccine	Regional deliberation
Abruzzo	12		13-26	Gardasil	DGR n. 1359 27/12/2007
Basilicata	12, 15, 18 and 25		13-26	Gardasil	DGR n. 838 11/06/2007
Bolzano	12		13-26	Gardasil	DGR n. 4699 28/12/2007
Calabria	12	13		Cervarix	Nota Regionale 13/11/2007
Campania	12			Gardasil	Circolare Regionale 02/08/2007
Emilia Romagna	12	13	14-17	Cervarix	DGR n. 236 25/02/2008
Friuli Venezia Giulia	12 and 16		17	Cervarix	DGR n. 856 15/05/2008
Lazio	12	13	14-26	Gardasil	DGR n. 133 29/02/2008
Liguria	12	13	14-26	Cervarix	DGR n. 54 25/01/2008 Nota integrativa Prot n. PG/2008/173464 del 30/12/2008
Lombardia	12			Gardasil	DGR n. VIII/006683 del 27/02/2008
Marche	12	13	14-17	Cervarix	DGR n. 433 26/03/2008
Molise	12	13	14-26	Gardasil	DGR n. 368 08/04/2008
Piemonte	12 and 16			Cervarix	DGR n. 8-8167 del 11/02/2008
Puglia	12			Cervarix	DGR n. 245 26/02/2008
Sardegna	12		13-17	Cervarix	Deliberazione 32/12 04/06/2008
Sicilia	12	13	14-26	Cervarix/ Gardasil	Decreto Assessoriale 29/02/2008
Toscana	12 and 16	13, 14 and 15		Cervarix	DGR n. 1020 27/12/2007 and DGR n. 856 27/10/2008
Trento	12		13-26	Gardasil	Comunicato n. 2336 22/08/2008
Umbria	12	13	14-17	Cervarix	DGR n. 84 04/02/2008
Valle d'Aosta	12 and 16	13		Cervarix	DGR n. 2371 31/08/2007
Veneto	12	13	14-26	Gardasil	DGR n. 411 26/02/2008 Protocollo Generale 07/58302 18/06/2007

criteria used by the decision-makers were, and still are, vigorously debated.

In view of the importance of this vaccination to public health and the ethical issues involved, the editorial staff of our journal has decided to open a free forum on HPV vaccination. It seems particularly important to sustain the vaccination campaign in such a way as to reach high coverage rates as soon as possible, and to create a specific system for the surveillance of HPV-diseases and for the evaluation of the vaccination performances. Furthermore, it is crucial to consider that some important questions regarding HPV vaccination are still open, such as the duration of protection, the possible need for a booster dose at some time after completion of the first vaccination cycle, the establishment

of a protective serological correlate, the best policy to implement in the various epidemiological contexts, the most effective prophylactic use of vaccination and screening tests and how to vaccinate women both in developed countries and in developing ones.

To this regard the Journal will invite Italian and international professionals to write reviews concerning this subject.

The Journal wants also to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> year of life and on this occasion the Editorial Board wants to confirm the aim of the Journal, which is to provide a continuous update of the scientific and practical knowledge in Public Health field.

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