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Knowledge of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV)
in First Year Medical Students
from San Juan Bautista School of Medicine,
Caguas, Puerto Rico
During Second Semester, 2013: A Pilot Study

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Introduction: Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection represents a public health concern because of its empirical-proved association with certain types of cancer including cervical. HPV infections affect mostly young adults including college aged populations. The aim of this study was to assess the knowledge regarding HPV among medical students, a group who will eventually educate patients about this and other diseases.

Methods: A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to first year, medical students from San Juan Bautista, School of Medicine in Caguas Puerto Rico, during the second semester of academic year 2013. A knowledge questionnaire was used based on the guidelines of Jiménez-Herrera (2007). Index was developed using a numerical value scale based on the sum of the affirmative answers of the questionnaire ranging from 0-1 (low), 2-3 (moderate) and 4-5 (higher) knowledge. Descriptive statistics were performed using SPSS version 17.0.

Results: A total sample of 53 students was surveyed. 55% (n= 29) were men and 45% (n=24) were women. Age ranged from 21 to 24 years (58.8%). The main sources of HPV information were college (28.3%) and the news (20.8%). The index showed that 34% of the students had moderate knowledge about the HPV infection.

Discussion: Our results are consistent with previous research demonstrated knowledge deficiencies about HPV among college students. This trait encompasses serious health implications particularly among medical students because of the lack of accuracy to educate their patients about this infection. Intervention strategies and educational efforts to increase knowledge in this group are recommended.