

# Awareness and Attitudes Towards HPV Vaccination Among Female Secondary School Students in Mararaba, Karu L.G.A, Nasarawa State

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The Human Papillomavirus vaccine is one of the recommended interventions for cervical cancer control worldwide. It has been included in the national immunization programmes in more than 60 countries around the world. This research aimed to assess the level of awareness and attitude of secondary school female students in Mararaba, Karu L.G.A., Nasarawa State, toward Human Papillomavirus vaccination.

**Method:** The study population comprised female junior secondary students aged 9-14 years in five secondary schools sampled from both private and government secondary schools in Mararaba, Karu L.G.A, Nasarawa State. A cross-sectional descriptive study design was employed for this research. Using Kish's formula, a sample of 320 students was selected with a response rate of 300 students, and a multi-stage sampling technique was employed for the research. Quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire as the data collection tool. Participants independently completed paper versions of the questionnaire (self-administered survey).

**Result:** Firstly, on age was 78.7% aged 12–14 and 21.3% aged 9–11, all respondents were female N=300, most participants attend private schools 61.3% while 38.7% are in public schools, respondents are spread across different ethnic groups, from class JSS1 41.7%, JSS2 24.3%, and JSS3 34.0%, for parental education, the profile is relatively high, 57.0% tertiary and 40.0% secondary, with high parental occupation too. The average awareness level of respondents was 48.1% with teachers being the highest source of HPV information. Only 4.7% of respondents have been vaccinated with the most perceived reasons for attitude towards HPV vaccination are fear that vaccination will be painful and dangerous 48.3%, 27.3% of respondents feel too embarrassed to ask for the HPV vaccination, with traditional methods are more effective 22.7%, Most significant factors influencing respondents willingness to receive HPV vaccine are 55.0% do not know where to go for vaccination, 50.3% don't think the vaccine is available in Nigeria, fear of the adverse effect of the vaccine 31.0% and 21.7% agreed that the vaccine is expensive. Regardless, 91.3% expressed interest in learning more about the HPV vaccine, and 48.7% showed interest in receiving it; additionally, 52.0% agreed to get vaccinated against cervical cancer if the service were available at the school.

**Conclusion:** While awareness significantly impacts attitudes toward vaccine uptake, efforts should target not only increasing awareness among students but also addressing misconceptions and fears related to the vaccine, improving teachers' knowledge of HPV, and conducting public lectures to enhance community awareness about HPV.

