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Korea announces global study to determine burden of HPV among girls and women

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Study receives $14.99 million funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with $1 million co-funding from the Swedish government

The International Vaccine Institute (IVI), in South Korea, has announced the start of a multi-country study to better understand the burden of Human papillomavirus (HPV) among girls and women in low- and lower middle-income countries. This study will help inform intervention implementation and prioritisation of research and development efforts that have the greatest potential public health impact.

The focus of this global HPV burden study will be on girls and women ages 9 to 50 in three South Asian countries and five sub-Saharan African countries that currently have no or limited data on HPV burden and have either not yet introduced HPV vaccines into national immunization programs or have had mixed success with uptake.

The study also includes qualitative sub-studies to further understand how gender-related dynamics create barriers to HPV prevention, screening, and treatment services, further influencing HPV burden in girls and women.

Collaborators on this study include investigators from London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), who are part of the Single-Dose HPV Vaccine Evaluation Consortium along with Dr Julia Lynch (IVI's Cholera Programme Director and HPV Study Team Lead), and investigators from the Department of Global Public Health at Karolinska Institutet. The team has completed regional workshops to ensure a harmonised study protocol across all eight countries, hosted in Nepal for the South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan) and Tanzania for the African countries (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zambia).

IVI is also leading a study in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand to demonstrate the effectiveness of a single dose of HPV, thereby making vaccination more accessible than the current two- or three-dose schedules.