

NEW PAN-CANADIAN DATA ON BURDEN OF HPV-RELATED DISEASES REVEALED TODAY

**Canadian women are estimated to make 85,000 medical visits a year
due to genital warts**

WINNIPEG (Manitoba) – December 3, 2006 – A new study by Dr. Marc Brisson, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Mathematical Modeling and Health Economics of Infectious Diseases at Laval University, shows for the first time that significant healthcare resources are being used to diagnose and treat HPV (human papillomavirus) 6, 11, 16 and 18-related diseases, including cervical cancer and genital warts. These new findings were presented at the 7th Canadian Immunization Conference (CIC) today in Winnipeg.

“Each year, the diseases attributable to HPV are estimated to cost the Canadian healthcare system over \$300 million,” said Dr. Brisson. “My research shows that HPV vaccination has the potential to significantly reduce the burden caused by HPV types 6, 11, 16 and 18-related diseases. When we look at genital warts, our model estimates that only eight women need to be vaccinated to prevent one case. This tells us that there are a lot of people that get genital warts and that the vaccine is effective at preventing them.”

Genital warts create anxiety

Genital warts are unsightly cauliflower-like masses of various sizes and shapes¹ that can grow and multiply, if left untreated.² Most people (66 per cent) who have sexual contact with a partner infected by genital warts will develop warts themselves usually within three months of contact.³ Condoms do not give complete protection against HPV infection.

A new vaccine called GARDASIL™ was approved by Health Canada for girls and women between the ages of 9 and 26 for the prevention of HPV types 6, 11, 16 and 18-related diseases, including genital warts. Clinical studies showed that, per protocol population, the vaccine was 99 per cent effective against the four HPV types that cause more than 90 per cent of all genital warts.

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“Genital warts occur frequently among my patients and are a nightmare to treat. They are very persistent and too often recur. Aside from the difficult treatment aspect, genital warts have a strong emotional impact on the people who get them,” said Dr. Stephen Coyle, Chief Medical Officer of the Misericordia Hospital in Winnipeg. “One of my patients was so emotionally affected by her own case of genital warts that she insisted I vaccinate both her children with the new HPV vaccine, just as soon as it became available. She wanted to do all she could to prevent them from the suffering she experienced with genital warts.”

Mathematical model shows HPV’s impact on healthcare system

Dr. Brisson’s study on the economic and health burden of HPV infection and associated diseases used a mathematical model that followed a cohort of 10-year-old girls through different disease states for four HPV types. The annual burden of HPV infection was estimated by applying the modeled incidence rates to the 2005 Canadian population.

In his study, Dr. Brisson estimates that each year in Canada HPV types 6, 11, 16 and 18 cause 36,000 new cases of genital warts, 800 new cases of cervical cancer and 300 cervical cancer deaths. Also, genital warts cause an estimated 85,000 consultations a year with Canadian physicians.

This same mathematical model was used to estimate the number of people needed to vaccinate (NNV) in order to prevent HPV-related disease and mortality. This measure, which is calculated by dividing the number of people in the cohort by the predicted number of HPV-related events prevented in this cohort’s lifetime, helps predict the effectiveness of a vaccine. The lower the NNV value, the better.

The following lists the NNV values determined by Dr. Brisson for various HPV 6, 11, 16 and 18-related diseases:

Genital warts	8
CIN1*	14
CIN2/3**	31
Cervical cancer	276
Cervical cancer death	639

* Abnormal changes in the cells of the cervix that may lead to cancer

** Abnormal changes in the cells of the cervix that will lead to cancer if not treated

This means that only eight Canadian women need to be vaccinated in order to prevent one case of genital warts and 639 women to prevent one cervical cancer death.

“Given these results, I hope that elected officials and public health policymakers will be able to use our research to choose the best strategies to prevent HPV-related diseases in the context of limited healthcare budgets,” said Dr. Brisson.

This study was funded by Merck Frosst.

About Merck Frosst

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¹ Afraidtoask.com Web site. (Accessed at <http://www.afraidtoask.com/STD/hpv.html>).

² Kids Health Web site. (Accessed at http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/sexual_health/stds/std_warts.html).

³ National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases Web site.
(Accessed at <http://www.niaid.nih.gov/factsheets/stdhpv.htm>).