UDK 615.371:[616.988:578.827 **Original Scientific Paper**
Doi: 10.7251/SANUS2604179I

HPV VACCINATION IN REPUBLIC OF SERBIA: IMMUNIZATION COVERAGE, AWARENESS, AND ATTITUDES OF ADOLESCENTS

***Milica Ilić*[1], *Maja Trailović*[1], *Milica Mančić*[1], *Saška Stajić*[1], *Christos Alexopoulos*[1], *Mile Despotović*[1], *Miloš Krstić*[2], *Milena Zlatanović*[1]**
[1]The Academy of Applied Preschool Teaching and Health Studies, Krusevac, Republic of Serbia
[2]General Hospital Ćuprija, Republic of Serbia

Abstract. *Human papilloma virus (HPV) is among the most common sexually transmitted infections and represents a significant public health issue due to its major role in the development of cervical cancer and other malignant diseases. Although HPV vaccination is an effective measure of primary prevention, immunization coverage in many countries, including Republic of Serbia, is still not at a satisfactory level. The aim of this study was to analyze HPV vaccination coverage in the Republic of Republic of Serbia, as well as to examine the awareness, knowledge, and attitudes of adolescents regarding HPV infection and vaccination. The research was conducted as a retrospective cross-sectional study and data analysis. The retrospective part of the study included an analysis of annual reports from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Institute of Public Health of Republic of Serbia „Dr Milan Jovanović Batut", while the cross-sectional study was carried out through an anonymous questionnaire among 51 adolescents. The results indicate that the HPV vaccination program in Republic of Serbia, introduced in 2022 with the administration of the nine-valent Gardasil 9 vaccine, led to a significant increase in the number of administrated doses, from 20,130 in 2022 to 63,198 in 2023, while 31,011 individuals received the first dose during 2023. At the same time, the survey among adolescents showed a high level of awareness regarding HPV infection, since 92.2% of respondents had heard about the virus, while 86.3% were familiar with its association with cervical cancer. In addition, most respondents knew that the HPV vaccine exists and that it is intended for both males and females. Despite this, a certain level of hesitation toward vaccination was observed, as only 30.2% of respondents considered the vaccine to be safe, while willingness to be immunized remained low. The most common reasons for vaccine refusal were insufficient information and fear of side effects. Particularly concerning is the finding that almost half of the respondents did not consider themselves at risk of HPV infection, despite recognizing the virus as a serious health threat. The obtained results indicate that, despite the increasing HPV vaccination coverage and a satisfactory level of awareness among young people, there is still a need for continuous education and strengthening confidence in vaccines. Improving preventive and educational activities could significantly contribute to increasing immunization coverage and preventing malignant diseases caused by HPV infection in Republic of Serbia.*

Keywords: *Human papilloma virus, HPV vaccination, adolescents, prevention, cervical cancer.*

Introduction

Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection represents a significant public health problem due to its association with the development of malignant diseases. HPV is a common sexually transmitted infection, and persistent infection with certain oncogenic types of the virus can lead to the development of precancerous lesions and cancer. Almost all cases of cervical cancer are associated with HPV infection, which gives prevention of the infection a particularly important role in reducing the burden of this disease. HPV vaccination, together with organized screening, represents one of the key measures for the prevention of cervical cancer. As part of the global strategy to eliminate cervical cancer, the World Health Organization set a target for 90% of girls to be fully vaccinated against HPV by the age of 15 by 2030 [1].

Although the HPV vaccine has been introduced in numerous countries, a large number of adolescents remain unvaccinated. Vaccination acceptance is influenced by various factors, including vaccine availability and the organization of the healthcare system, as well as knowledge, attitudes and acceptance of vaccination among adolescents and their parents or guardians [2]. Adequate provision of information to young people is particularly important, given that adolescents are often not sufficiently involved in vaccination decisions and do not regularly receive information about HPV infection and the possibilities for its prevention. Educational interventions targeting this population may contribute to a better understanding of the risk and seriousness of HPV infection, as well as to addressing uncertainties and misconceptions related to vaccination [3].

In the Republic of Republic of Serbia, recommended immunization against HPV with the nine-valent vaccine began in 2022 [4]. Monitoring vaccine administration, together with assessing adolescents' awareness, knowledge and attitudes, is important for a better understanding of HPV vaccination acceptance and possible barriers to its wider implementation. In this context, investigating these aspects may provide a basis for directing future educational and preventive activities.

The aim of this study was to analyze HPV vaccination coverage in the Republic of Republic of Serbia and to examine adolescents' awareness, knowledge and attitudes regarding HPV infection and vaccination.

Methodology

The study was conducted as a cross-sectional study and a retrospective data analysis. The retrospective part of the study included an analysis of annual reports of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Institute of Public Health of Republic of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanović Batut”. The cross-sectional study was conducted using an anonymous questionnaire designed for the purposes of this research. The study included 51 adolescent respondents from the general population in the municipalities of Paraćin and Ćuprija. The questionnaire collected data on respondents' awareness, knowledge and attitudes regarding HPV infection and HPV vaccination.

Results

Analysis of HPV vaccination data in the Republic of Republic of Serbia showed an increase in the number of administered doses during the observed period. By December 31, 2022, a total of 20,130 doses of the nine-valent HPV vaccine Gardasil 9 had been administered, while by December 28, 2023, the number of administered doses had reached 63,198. During 2022, a total of 14,164 individuals received the first dose, including 7,376 aged 9–14 years and 6,788 aged 15–19 years. During 2023, 31,011 individuals received the first dose, including 17,068 aged 9–14 years and 13,943 aged 15–19 years. An increase in the number of administered doses was also recorded for the second and third vaccine doses (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of HPV vaccine doses administered in the Republic of Republic of Serbia by year and age group

HPV vaccination	**2022.**	**2023.**
Total number of administered doses	20,130	63,198
First dose, total	14,164	31,011
First dose, 9-14 years	7,376	17,068
First dose, 15-19 years	6,788	13,943
Second dose, 9-14 years	734	10,509
Second dose, 15-19 years	4,561	12,617
Third dose, 15-19 years	618	9,061

In the European Region, coverage with the first dose of the HPV vaccine by age 15 among females was 40% in 2022 and 41% in 2023, while among males it was 19% and 21%, respectively. For the final dose of the vaccine, the corresponding values among females were 31% in 2022 and 32% in 2023, and among males 16% and 18%, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. HPV vaccination in the European Region by dose, sex and year

HPV vaccination by age 15	**2022.**	**2023.**
First dose - female	40%	41%
First dose - male	19%	21%
Final dose - female	31%	32%
Final dose - male	16%	18%

In the Republic of Republic of Serbia, the value for the first dose of the HPV vaccine in the 9–14-year age group was 1.6% in 2022 and 3.7% in 2023, while the values for the second dose in the 15–19-year age group were 0.16% and 2.3%. In the European Region, data are presented by sex and refer to the population up to 15 years of age (Table 3).

Table 3. Presentation of HPV vaccination data in the Republic of Republic of Serbia and the European Region

HPV vaccination	**2022.**	**2023.**
Republic of Republic of Serbia, 9-14 years - first dose	1.6%	3.7%
European Region, up to 15 years - first dose, female	40%	41%
European Region, up to 15 years -first dose, male	19%	21%
Republic of Republic of Serbia, 15-19 years - second dose	0.16%	2.3%
European Region, up to 15 years -final dose, female	31%	32%
European Region, up to 15 years - final dose, male	16%	18%

The survey part of the study included 51 adolescent respondents. According to sex, 14.0% of respondents were male and 86.0% were female. With regard to age, 20.0% of respondents were younger than 20 years, while 80.0% belonged to the 20–24-year age group. The largest proportion of respondents lived in rural areas (64.7%), 25.5% in urban areas, and 9.8% in suburban areas (Table 4).

Table 4. Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Category	**%**
Sex	Male	14.0
	Female	86.0
Age	<20 years	20.0
	20-24 years	80.0
Place of residence	Urban	25.5
	Rural	64.7
	Suburban	9.8

Regarding awareness and knowledge of HPV infection, 92.2% of respondents reported that they had heard of human papillomavirus. A total of 86.3% knew that HPV can cause cervical cancer, and the same percentage recognized sexual contact as a route of infection transmission. The existence of the HPV vaccine was known to 80.4% of respondents, while 78.4% knew that the vaccine is intended for both males and females (Table 5).

Table 5. Adolescents' awareness and knowledge of HPV infection and HPV vaccination

Indicator	Response	**%**
Heard of HPV	Yes	92.2
HPV can cause cervical cancer	Yes	86.3
HPV is sexually transmitted	Yes	86.3
Know that an HPV vaccine exists	Yes	80.4
Know that the HPV vaccine is intended for both males and females	Yes	78.4

Table 6 presents adolescents' attitudes toward HPV vaccination. Regarding attitudes toward HPV vaccination, 30.2% of respondents considered the HPV vaccine safe, while 43.1% were unsure; other responses accounted for 26.7%. A total of 23.5% of respondents would get vaccinated against HPV, 43.1% would not, and 33.3% were unsure. The HPV vaccine would be recommended to their peers by 35.3% of respondents, 17.6% considered such a recommendation unnecessary, while 47.1% did not know whether they would recommend it.

Table 6. Adolescents' attitudes toward HPV vaccination

Indicator	Response	%
Assessment of HPV vaccine safety	Considers the vaccine safe	30.2
	Unsure	43.1
	Other responses	26.7
Willingness to be vaccinated	Yes	23.5
	No	43.1
	Unsure	33.3
Recommendation of the HPV vaccine to peers	Yes, I would recommend it	35.3
	No, I do not think it is necessary	17.6
	I do not know	47.1

The most frequently reported reason for refusing HPV vaccination was insufficient information (52.5%), followed by fear of adverse effects (20.0%), while 15.0% considered vaccination unnecessary. Regarding information about vaccines, respondents expressed the greatest trust in physicians (68.6%), followed by midwives and nurses (17.6%), while 7.8% identified the Internet as the most trusted source. Perceived personal risk of HPV infection was low: 47.1% of respondents considered themselves not at risk at all, 23.5% considered their risk low, and 25.5% moderate. At the same time, 60.8% of respondents assessed HPV as a very serious health threat, while 31.4% considered it a moderately serious threat (Table 7).

Table 7. Reasons for refusing vaccination, trusted sources of information and perception of HPV infection risk

Indicator	Response	**%**
Reason for refusing vaccination	Insufficient information	52.5
	Fear of adverse effects	20.0
	Considers vaccination unnecessary	15.0
Most trusted source of vaccine information	Physicians	68.6
	Midwives/nurses	17.6
	Internet	7.8
Perception of personal risk of HPV infection	None	47.1
	Low	23.5
	Moderate	25.5
Assessment of HPV as a health threat	Moderately serious	31.4
	Very serious	60.8

Taken together, the results show a simultaneous increase in the number of HPV vaccine doses administered in the Republic of Republic of Serbia and a relatively high level of adolescents' awareness of HPV infection and vaccination. Nevertheless, the high level of awareness was not accompanied by an equally high level of confidence in vaccine safety and willingness to be vaccinated. A particularly notable finding is the discrepancy between recognizing HPV as a serious health threat and the low perception of personal risk of infection. These findings provide a basis for considering the relationship between awareness, risk perception and adolescents' attitudes toward HPV vaccination.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate a positive trend in the administration of the HPV vaccine in the Republic of Republic of Serbia following the introduction of recommended immunization with the nine-valent vaccine in 2022. The increase in the number of administered doses during the observed period indicates greater use of the HPV vaccine; however, data for Republic of Serbia and the European Region should be interpreted with consideration of differences in the way they are presented by age and sex, which means that a direct comparison of coverage is not entirely possible. At the same time, available research shows that acceptance of the HPV vaccine is a complex process influenced not only by knowledge about the infection and vaccination, but also by risk perception, safety concerns, availability of appropriate information and recommendations from healthcare professionals [5,6,7].

The survey part of our study showed relatively good awareness among young people regarding HPV infection, its association with cervical cancer, the existence of the vaccine and the fact that vaccination is intended for both sexes. Compared with an earlier study conducted among female students in Republic of Serbia, in which awareness of HPV infection was lower, our findings indicate a higher level of basic awareness [8]. However, differences between the results should be considered in light of the different periods in which the studies were conducted and the characteristics of the populations examined. A study among students in health-related fields also showed that relatively good awareness of HPV, vaccination and cervical cancer may coexist with gaps in specific knowledge [9]. A more recent study conducted among students in Belgrade showed an association between knowledge and characteristics of the information environment and vaccination status, further indicating the importance not only of the availability of information but also of the sources of information to which young people are exposed [10].

One of the more important findings of our study is the discrepancy between relatively good awareness and attitudes toward vaccination. Knowledge of basic facts about HPV was not accompanied by an equally high level of confidence in vaccine safety and willingness to be vaccinated. A similar pattern is observed among future healthcare workers in Republic of Serbia, among whom, despite knowledge about HPV, a substantial proportion of unvaccinated students did not plan to be vaccinated [11]. This separation between knowledge and the vaccination decision itself is also

supported by the systematic review and meta-analysis by Jiboc et al. [7], in which knowledge about HPV infection was associated with vaccination, whereas knowledge about the HPV vaccine alone did not show such an association. This supports the view that awareness is an important, but not sufficient, prerequisite for vaccination acceptance.

The reasons for such attitudes toward vaccination are further explained by the barriers reported by our respondents, among which insufficient information and fear of adverse effects were particularly prominent. These findings are widely supported in the literature. In a systematic review of European studies, López et al. [5] identified safety concerns and lack of information among the most common barriers to HPV vaccine acceptance, while Zheng et al. [6] reached similar conclusions among adolescents and young adults. Jiboc et al. [7] also identified fear of adverse effects and insufficient information as factors associated with vaccination. The importance of insufficient information is also supported by Rodrigues et al. [12], who identified it among parents' reasons for not vaccinating children and adolescents. The consistency of findings across different studies indicates that general awareness of HPV may not resolve specific concerns that directly influence the vaccination decision.

Closely related to awareness is the perception of personal risk. In our study, there was a marked discrepancy between recognizing HPV infection as a serious health threat and assessing one's own exposure to risk. Such a finding shows that awareness of the seriousness of a health problem does not necessarily imply recognition of personal susceptibility to infection. López et al. [5] identified low perceived susceptibility to HPV infection as one of the barriers to vaccine acceptance, while higher perceived susceptibility was among the factors associated with acceptance. Jiboc et al. [7] also reported the belief that the likelihood of infection is low among the factors influencing vaccination acceptance, while Zheng et al. [6] identified perceived risk of HPV infection as one of the factors that may facilitate vaccine acceptance.

In addition to the content of information, the source from which it originates is also important. In our study, healthcare professionals, particularly physicians, emerged as the sources most trusted by young people for vaccine-related information. The importance of professional sources of information is also supported by research showing that receiving information from physicians is among the factors associated with HPV vaccine acceptance [5]. In a Republic of Serbian study by Marić et al. [13], a pediatrician's recommendation was independently associated with a positive parental attitude toward HPV vaccination among children of the appropriate age. However, the relationship with information sources is not straightforward. A qualitative study by Karafillakis et al. [14] showed that the decisions of adolescent girls and their mothers may be shaped by trust, uncertainty and exposure to different, sometimes conflicting, information. Participants emphasized the need for reliable information, while physicians and schools were recognized as potentially important sources. A more recent qualitative synthesis by Cooper et al. [2] also shows that a lack of biomedical knowledge about HPV and HPV vaccination may contribute to

delaying or refusing the vaccine, as well as uncertainty in decision-making. These findings are particularly relevant to our study because they indicate that the quality, comprehensibility and credibility of information may be as important as its availability.

Therefore, education should not be viewed merely as the transmission of basic facts about HPV. In the study by Antić et al. [15], an educational intervention led to a marked improvement in students' knowledge of HPV and the HPV vaccine, but the change in knowledge was not accompanied by a corresponding change in all attitudes toward the vaccine. This finding is important for interpreting our results because it further demonstrates that increased knowledge does not necessarily lead automatically to greater confidence in the vaccine. Similarly, Maletin et al. [11] show that previous education about HPV and greater awareness are associated with more favorable attitudes toward certain aspects of vaccination, indicating the importance of continuous and targeted education of young people.

Evidence from intervention studies further supports this approach. The systematic review by Flood et al. [16], focused on school-based educational interventions among adolescents, showed improvements in knowledge, attitudes and perceptions following educational interventions, while highlighting the importance of their continuity for maintaining the effects achieved. A more recent review by Iova et al. [3] also shows that various interventions targeting adolescents were generally accompanied by increased knowledge, while most studies that assessed vaccination intention recorded an increase after the intervention. These findings indicate that educational activities may play an important role, but also that their aim should not be limited to increasing knowledge; they should also address risk perception, confidence and concerns related to vaccination.

Taken as a whole, the results of our study show that the increase in HPV vaccine administration in Republic of Serbia is occurring alongside relatively good basic awareness among young people, but that a discrepancy remains between knowledge, risk perception, confidence in vaccine safety and willingness to be vaccinated. Our findings are largely consistent with the results of Republic of Serbian and international studies showing that the decision to receive HPV vaccination is not determined solely by the level of knowledge, but results from the interaction of awareness, perception of personal risk, confidence in the vaccine and sources of information. Therefore, educational activities should be directed not only toward providing basic information about HPV infection, but also toward clarifying specific concerns related to vaccination, with the active involvement of healthcare professionals as sources of expert and reliable information.

Conclusion

The results indicate an increase in HPV vaccine administration in the Republic of Republic of Serbia and relatively good awareness among adolescents regarding HPV infection and vaccination. Nevertheless, awareness was not accompanied by an

appropriate level of confidence in vaccine safety and willingness to be vaccinated. The observed discrepancy between recognition of the seriousness of HPV infection and low perceived personal risk indicates the need for continuous and targeted education of adolescents, with the active involvement of healthcare professionals as trusted sources of information.

References

[1] World Health Organization. Cervical cancer [Internet]. Geneva: World Health Organization; [cited 2026 Aug 2]. Available from: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cervical-cancer

[2] Cooper S, Schmidt BM, Jama NA, Ryan J, Leon N, Mavundza EJ, et al. Factors that influence caregivers' and adolescents' views and practices regarding human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination for adolescents: a qualitative evidence synthesis. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2025;4(4):CD013430. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD013430.pub2.

[3] Iova CF, Daina LG, Daina MD, Ghitea TC. The effectiveness of interventions targeting adolescents in HPV vaccination-a scoping review. Medicina (Kaunas). 2024;60(9):1550. doi:10.3390/medicina60091550.

[4] Institut za javno zdravlje Srbije „Dr Milan Jovanović Batut“. Godišnji izveštaj o sprovedenoj imunizaciji na teritoriji Republike Srbije u 2023. godini. Beograd: Institut za javno zdravlje Srbije „Dr Milan Jovanović Batut“; 2024.

[5] López N, Garcés-Sánchez M, Panizo MB, de la Cueva IS, Artés MT, Ramos B, et al. HPV knowledge and vaccine acceptance among European adolescents and their parents: a systematic literature review. Public Health Rev. 2020;41:10. doi:10.1186/s40985-020-00126-5.

[6] Zheng L, Wu J, Zheng M. Barriers to and facilitators of human papillomavirus vaccination among people aged 9 to 26 years: a systematic review. Sex Transm Dis. 2021;48(12):e255-e262. doi:10.1097/OLQ.0000000000001407.

[7] Jiboc NM, Paşca A, Tăut D, Băban AS. Factors influencing human papillomavirus vaccination uptake in European women and adolescents: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Psychooncology. 2024;33(1):e6242. doi:10.1002/pon.6242.

[8] Rančić NK, Golubović MB, Ilić MV, Ignjatović AS, Živadinović RM, Đenić SN, et al. Knowledge about cervical cancer and awareness of human papillomavirus (HPV) and HPV vaccine among female students from Republic of Serbia. Medicina (Kaunas). 2020;56(8):406. doi:10.3390/medicina56080406.

[9] Aksoy N, Ozturk N, Ulusoy S, Ömür MF. Knowledge and attitude of students studying at health department towards HPV and HPV vaccination. Vaccine. 2022;40(50):7211-7218. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2022.10.016.

[10] Mandić-Rajčević S, Stojković VJ, Paunić M, Ristić SS, Obradović M, Vuković D, et al. Association between the information environment, knowledge, perceived lack of information, and uptake of the HPV vaccine in female and male undergraduate students in Belgrade, Republic of Serbia. Eur J Investig Health Psychol Educ. 2025;15(2):21. doi:10.3390/ejihpe15020021.

[11] Maletin N, Denda N, Ljubičić A, Velicki R, Patić A, Golušin Z, et al. Knowledge and attitudes regarding human papillomavirus vaccination among future healthcare workers in Republic of Serbia. Vaccines (Basel). 2025;13(1):11. doi:10.3390/vaccines13010011.

[12] Rodrigues ES, Mendes EDT, Nucci LB. Parental justifications for not vaccinating children or adolescents against human papillomavirus (HPV). Vaccines (Basel). 2023;11(3):506. doi:10.3390/vaccines11030506.

[13] Marić G, Birčanin Đ, Kisić V, Dotlić J, Zarić M, Kisić-Tepavčević D, et al. Parental perspective on human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination in Republic of Serbia: knowledge, attitudes and practice. Sex Reprod Healthc. 2018;16:192-198. doi:10.1016/j.srhc.2018.04.010.
[14] Karafillakis E, Peretti-Watel P, Verger P, Chantler T, Larson HJ. 'I trust them because my mum trusts them': exploring the role of trust in HPV vaccination decision-making among adolescent girls and their mothers in France. Vaccine. 2022;40(8):1090-1097. doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2022.01.028.
[15] Antić L, Antić D, Aleksopulos H, Despotović M, Zlatanović M. Znanja i stavovi studenata o humanom papiloma virusu i HPV vakcini. Sestrinska reč. 2018;21(77):4-9. doi:10.5937/SestRec1877004A
[16] Flood T, Wilson IM, Prue G, McLaughlin M, Hughes CM. Impact of school-based educational interventions in middle adolescent populations (15-17yrs) on human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination uptake and perceptions/knowledge of HPV and its associated cancers: a systematic review. Prev Med. 2020;139:106168. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2020.106168.

HPV VAKCINACIJA U SRBIJI: OBUHVAT IMUNIZACIJOM, INFORMISANOST I STAVOVI ADOLESCENATA

***Milica Ilić*[1], Maja Trailović[1], Milica Mančić[1], Saška Stajić[1], Christos Alexopoulos[1], Mile Despotović[1], Miloš Krstić[2], Milena Zlatanović[1]**
[1]Akademija vaspitačko-medicinskih strukovnih studija, Kruševac, Republika Srbija
[2]Opšta bolnica Ćuprija, Republika Srbija

Sažetak. *Humani papiloma virus (HPV) ubraja se među najčešće polno prenosive infekcije i predstavlja važan javnozdravstveni problem zbog značajne uloge u nastanku karcinoma grlića materice i drugih malignih oboljenja. Iako HPV vakcinacija predstavlja efikasnu meru primarne prevencije, obuhvat imunizacijom u mnogim zemljama, uključujući Srbiju, još uvek nije na zadovoljavajućem nivou. Cilj rada bio je analiza obuhvata HPV vakcinacijom u Republici Srbiji, kao i ispitivanje informisanosti, znanja i stavova adolescenata o HPV infekciji i vakcinaciji. Istraživanje je sprovedeno kao studija preseka i retrospektivna analiza podataka. Retrospektivni deo istraživanja obuhvatio je analizu godišnjih izveštaja Svetske zdravstvene organizacije (WHO) i Instituta za javno zdravlje Srbije „Dr Milan Jovanović Batut“, dok je studija preseka realizovana putem anonimnog upitnika među 51 adolescentom. Rezultati pokazuju da je program HPV vakcinacije u Srbiji, započet 2022. godine primenom devetovalentne vakcine Gardasil 9, doveo do značajnog povećanja broja datih doza, sa 20.130 u 2022. godini na 63.198 u 2023. godini, dok je prvu dozu tokom 2023. godine primilo 31.011 osoba. Istovremeno, istraživanje među adolescentima pokazalo je visok nivo informisanosti o HPV infekciji, budući da je 92,2% ispitanika čulo za virus, dok je 86,3% upoznato sa njegovom povezanošću sa karcinomom grlića materice. Takođe, većina ispitanika zna da HPV vakcina postoji i da je namenjena i muškom i ženskom polu. Uprkos tome, prisutna je izražena rezervisanost prema vakcinaciji, jer samo 30,2% ispitanika smatra vakcinu bezbednom, dok je spremnost za imunizaciju niska. Kao najčešći razlozi odbijanja navode se nedovoljna informisanost i strah od neželjenih efekata. Posebno zabrinjava podatak da gotovo polovina ispitanika ne smatra da je u riziku od HPV infekcije, uprkos prepoznavanju virusa kao ozbiljne zdravstvene pretnje. Dobijeni rezultati ukazuju da, uprkos rastu obuhvata HPV vakcinacijom i zadovoljavajućem nivou informisanosti mladih, i dalje postoji potreba za kontinuiranom edukacijom i jačanjem poverenja u vakcinu. Unapređenje preventivnih i edukativnih aktivnosti moglo bi značajno doprineti povećanju obuhvata imunizacijom i prevenciji malignih oboljenja izazvanih HPV infekcijom u Srbiji.*
Ključne reči: *Humani papiloma virus, HPV vakcinacija, adolescenti, prevencija, karcinom grlića materice.*