Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Safety Assessment: The Methods Matter

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The Authors Reply We are grateful for the valuable advice concerning our paper indicating a possible relationship between human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination and various neurological manifestations (1). The aim of this paper was to describe the variety of neurological symptoms and unexplained complaints seen in Japanese girls immunized with the HPV vaccine. Among these complications, complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS)-like limb pain, limb tremors and orthostatic dysregulation were predominant. Wilson disease and Huntington disease are representative disorders involving involuntary limb movement and mental retardation in adolescents; however, these well-known diseases do not induce the type of intractable limb pain, such as CRPS, seen in post-vaccinated Japanese girls. CRPS itself is reported to occur rarely in adolescent girls (2). The clinical picture of the involved girls is therefore considered to be very unique.

Our patients certainly demonstrated a wide range in the incubation period after HPV vaccination, and some of their neurological manifestations were non-specific. Therefore, we cannot deny the fact that false adverse reactions may have been included; i.e., that the symptoms occurred by chance. We are currently proposing and planning a large cohort study to collect information for similar events and/or complaints from HPV-unvaccinated Japanese girls of the same ages. We are also required to perform a long follow-up observation of the involved girls, with a large amount of information being provided at a special social community meeting (antihpvvaccine@yahoo.co.jp). The present clinical data were obtained from one institute with the assistance of a few well-trained neurologists, and the analysis of the clinical data is reliable. However, we agree with the need to employ a well-developed scientific method for investigation in the future studies mentioned above. Notably, another Japanese group recently proposed a new disease entity, human papilloma vaccination associated with neuroimmunopathic syndrome (HANS) (3). HANS syndrome covers all of our reported neurological manifestations. Before making further decisions regarding HPV vaccination in Japan, authorities need to rely on safety information for the HPV vaccine obtained from large numbers of Japanese girls.

The authors state that they have no Conflict of Interest (COI).

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References