Dental healthcare professionals collaborating to increase HPV vaccination rates

Sharon Humiston, Christina Demopoulos, Kurt Seetoo, Judith Feinstein, Dana Bright

Summary of Topic:
HPV may cause 70% of oropharyngeal cancers, but symptoms usually are obscured until later cancer stages so it is crucial for dental professionals to be part of primary prevention efforts. We will present broad-based interdisciplinary strategies regarding effective dental collaborations with medical and public health groups regarding HPV vaccination.

Description of Session:
This seminar provides an overview of HPV’s role in OPCs and presents strategies for broad-based interdisciplinary communications about HPV vaccine and cancer prevention as an example of effective medical-dental collaboration. Key organizations and their efforts that will be highlighted in this session include:

1) American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD): The AAPD drafted and has now approved a new guideline on HPV. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is partnering with AAPD to get HPV information into Pediatric Dentistry Today and soliciting the help of the AAP to develop guidance on how to have difficult conversations with parents/adolescents in a way that makes the encounter positive and comfortable for the provider and the patient and their family.

2) Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors (ASTDD): The audience for the ASTDD HPV policy is state oral health programs and the key message to communicate is how they can play a crucial role in preventing oral cancer through the promotion of HPV vaccination and oral screening. ASTDD has vision for convening a group of dental groups to write a consensus statement on the topic, develop a prescription pad for dentists that promotes HPV vaccination, communicate with state oral health programs on this topic, and connect with the ASTHO.

3) American Dental Association (ADA): The ADA is actively moving towards a strategic program with academic sites around HPV prevention that includes HPV vaccination promotion. ADA is focused on information delivery as well as teaching dentists about screening and assessment of HPV. ADA is committed to trying to better collaborate with pediatricians on this topic and creating an active role for dentists in HPV prevention. This may be a key opportunity to solidify the need for better medical/dental collaboration on a variety of topics that affect overall health.

4) American Academy of Public Health Dentistry (AAPHD): The AAPHD Council on Practice is in the process of developing a white paper that will likely include HPV as a topic and they are now a part of the American Cancer Society National HPV Roundtable. AAPHD is working to better educate its members on HPV and would recommend many of the same strategies as have been described by other groups.

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:
1. Describe the relationship between HPV and OPC and the role of HPV vaccine and disease prevention within an appropriate clinical context.

2. Summarize how to develop collaborative dental partnerships and referral networks and best utilize the roles and networks of certain partners, including state oral health programs, to support an interprofessional workforce including healthcare professionals, immunization staff and others in promoting the use of the HPV vaccine.

3. Identify strategies for communication in and among the health professions about HPV including tools for how to do this effectively and comfortably, in order to increase the use of the HPV vaccine and to raise public awareness about signs, symptoms, risk factors and changing demographics of HPV-related OPC in comparison.