

ABSTRACT

Over 99.7% of cervical cancer cases are linked to high-risk human papillomavirus (hrHPV) infection, making the human papillomavirus the primary cause of the disease. While most HPV infections are asymptomatic and self-limiting, chronic HPV infections can cause genital warts, oropharyngeal carcinoma, and cervical cancer in females, in addition to various anogenital malignancies and other genital warts in both men and women. The aim of this cross-sectional descriptive study was to detect HPV genotypes and to determine the risk levels and vaccine-associated factors for HPV among female patients attending Rabnor Sub County Hospital in Kisumu County. The study population included females of 15 years and above since this age group is considered sexually active out of which, a sample size of 374 participants were recruited using a convenience sampling technique. All of them had their HPV genotypes characterized. The DNA hybrids were detected with a chemiluminescent substrate, Digene Hybrid Capture 2 (HC2) technology. A questionnaire was administered to collect sociodemographic, reproductive and sexual history data, which was then entered into Microsoft Excel (2010) worksheets, cleaned and transferred to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Descriptive and inferential (logistic regression) analyses ($\alpha=0.05$) were used to summarize the data, and results were illustrated using charts and tables. Only 94/374 (25.13%) participants had the HPV genotypes detected in their samples with genotypes HPV 51 and HPV 56 being more commonly distributed and appearing more frequently with other genotypes. This study found that there is 23/94 (25.67%) risk of developing cervical cancer due to high risk level HPV (with the presence of low risk level HPV 71/94 (74.33%) known for causing various forms of warts. Most 298/374 (79.79%) of the respondents were knowledgeable of the availability of HPV vaccine yet only a few 66/298 (22.22%) were vaccinated. This demonstrated a low turnout considering that majority were fully aware that HPV can be sexually transmitted. The attitude of most 324/374 (86.67%) respondents towards those infected with HPV was wanting as they are viewed as a threat to the family members. Although they understood the benefit of disclosure, majority 281/374 (75%) were not willing to disclose the HPV status to their spouses for fear of rejection and criticism. HPV DNA kits should be availed by stakeholders for timely detection of low and high-risk levels HPV. This will ensure timely recognition of women at increased risk of cervical cancer development, thereby reducing mortality rate.