

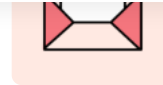
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# Combating Cervical Cancer: India's Bold Move with Vaccination

Cervical cancer is surrounded by myths and taboos that hinder prevention and treatment. Misconceptions include beliefs that cervical cancer is always fatal, spreads through casual contact, and that HPV infection is lifelong. Social taboos and stigma around cancer contribute to a lack of awareness and reluctance to seek medical help.



Dr Vandana Jain ETHealthWorld

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Cervical cancer poses a significant public health concern, primarily caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), a common sexually transmitted infection. India reports approximately 1.23 lakh new cases annually, with around 77,000 deaths attributed to the



population, India accounts for 27 per cent of global cervical cancer cases, making it the second most common cancer among women in the country. High incidence and mortality rates are due to limited access to screening, socioeconomic

disparities, and cultural taboos surrounding sexual health. Comprehensive interventions are necessary to address this crisis.

### Cervavac: A New Hope for Cervical Cancer Prevention

India's introduction of the indigenously developed HPV vaccine into the national immunization program is a significant stride in fighting cervical cancer. The government's strategy to vaccinate girls aged 9 to 14 aligns with global recommendations, aiming to reduce cervical cancer incidence by vaccinating individuals before exposure to high-risk HPV types. The vaccine will be provided free to eligible candidates through the national immunization program, ensuring access for marginalized communities. Authorized healthcare providers will administer the vaccine nationwide, supported by efforts to raise awareness and dispel misconceptions about

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Community Engagement and Education

The initiative's success depends on active participation from various stakeholders.

Healthcare providers play a crucial role in educating families, addressing concerns, and encouraging vaccination. Schools are effective platforms to reach the target age group, promoting vaccination through educational campaigns and health initiatives.

The government's commitment to monitoring the vaccine's safety and effectiveness, along with improving access and affordability, is vital for long-term success. Transparent communication about the vaccine's performance will build public trust. Collaborative efforts with NGOs and community leaders can help dispel myths and cultural taboos surrounding cervical cancer and HPV vaccination.

Cervical cancer is surrounded by myths and taboos that hinder prevention and treatment. Misconceptions include beliefs that cervical cancer is always fatal, spreads through casual contact, and that HPV infection is lifelong. Social taboos and stigma around cancer contribute to a lack of awareness and reluctance to seek medical help. Dispelling these myths and addressing societal taboos is essential to empower women to prioritize their health, seek early detection through screenings like Pap tests, and access HPV vaccination. Promoting accurate information and breaking the silence surrounding cervical cancer can reduce its impact and improve outcomes for women globally.

### Advancing Gender Equality Through Health Initiatives

Empowering girls and young women through the vaccination program is a significant step toward reducing the burden of cervical cancer and improving the overall health of India's female population. This initiative not only saves lives but also contributes to the country's broader goals of gender equality and women's empowerment. Maintaining momentum and collaborative efforts from the government, healthcare providers, educators, and the community will ensure every eligible girl in India has access to this life-saving vaccine.

### Conclusion

gender equality. The introduction of Cervavac into the national immunization program represents a crucial step in reducing cervical cancer rates and saving lives. By addressing myths, enhancing community engagement, and ensuring vaccine access, India can make significant strides in combating this preventable disease and empowering its women for a healthier future.

The article is written by Dr Vandana Jain, Head Gynae Oncology, [RGCIRC](#)