Race a Factor in Completing HPV Vaccine Series

BY DEBRA L. BECK
From the annual meeting of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
TORONTO — Girls who identified themselves as white were twice as likely as those who identified themselves as black to complete the three-shot vaccination series against the human papillomavirus, according to a retrospective review of medical records.

“This is concerning because, historically, black women have had lower rates of cervical cancer screening and been more at risk from dying of cervical cancer. With unequal distribution of the vaccine, the racial disparity in cervical cancer may worsen,” said Dr. Lea Widdice, an assistant professor of pediatrics at the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. Dr. Widdice presented her results in a poster.

Moreover, overall only 14% of girls initiating the HPV vaccine series actually completed the three-shot series within 7 months of the first dose. Clinical recommendations for the vaccine are to get the third shot 6 months after the first.

Dr. Widdice and her colleagues conducted a retrospective review of medical records on 3,297 girls between ages 9 and 26 years, and who received their first HPV vaccine dose between June 2006 and June 2008 from an urban academic pediatric medical center with multiple primary care and specialty clinics.

Disclosures: None was reported.

Parents Call Vaccine Safety Top Priority
From the National Immunization Conference
ATLANTA — Vaccine safety is the most important consideration for parents in deciding whether their teens should receive recommended vaccines, a national survey of parents showed.

The 557 respondents came from Harris Poll Online’s survey panel, and each identified himself or herself as being the parent of at least one child aged 11-17 years, Dr. Stanley Schaffer of the University of Rochester (N.Y.) reported in a poster.

Parents most commonly cited vaccine safety as their single most important consideration in deciding whether their children should be immunized. Concerns about potential side effects were most pronounced for the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine; it was cited by 66% of parents of girls aged 11-14 years and 63% of parents of girls aged 15-17 years.

“When parents consider a number of factors when deciding whether or not to have their adolescents immunized, vaccine safety is clearly their No. 1 concern,” Dr. Schaffer said in an interview.

—Roxana Guildford-Blake