Reviewer's report

Title: An epidemiological study assessing the prevalence of human papillomavirus types in women in the Kingdom of Bahrain

Version: 4  Date: 23 June 2014

Reviewer: David Regan

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This manuscript provides a succinct and clearly presented report on the findings of a study to estimate type-specific prevalence of HPV in women in Bahrain.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The manuscript should include a table containing information on the characteristics of the study population, e.g., age, nationality, level of education.

2. The statement regarding cross-protective efficacy of the bivalent vaccine at lines 198 – 199 seems gratuitous (noting that 2 of the authors are GSK employees) and should be removed unless it can be given some context drawn from the results of the study. Similarly, the final sentence in this paragraph stating that this study provides data suggesting the need for a vaccine offering “broader protection” is unsupported and should be reworded unless it can be directly substantiated with reference to specific findings of the study.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The sentence at line 73 in grammatically incorrect. Perhaps it should read “As baseline data on HPV epidemiology and distribution of HPV types in Bahrain...”.

2. The authors should be more specific about the body that approved the study, given at line 90 as “the local institutional review board”, i.e., what is this body and what sort of approval was sought, was this an ethics approval, etc.

3. The sentence at line 171 beginning “We found that nearly 10% of women...” should be changed to “The findings from our study suggest that nearly 10% of women...”.

4. It is not clear on lines 151 – 152 whether each of the 3 women infected with HPV-16 were co-infected with all of HPV-31, -45, and -56 or whether each had some combination of co-infection with these types?

Discretionary Revisions

1. I am curious about HPV-74 found in 0.5% of women in the study. HPV-74 is not included in the list of low risk types HPV types given on lines 65 – 66 as being associated with disease. Is this an omission or is it unusual that HPV-74 was found in the study population? Is HPV-74 known to be associated with disease?

2. I think it would be interesting if the authors could provide some comment on the large difference in prevalence and risk of HPV infection between Bahraini and
non-Bahraini women in the Discussion. Could this be for example partly due to sample bias?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests