Author’s response to reviews

**Title:** Implementation of a national school-based Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine campaign in Fiji: knowledge, acceptability and information needs of parents

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Dear Editor

RE: Implementation of a national school-based Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine campaign in Fiji: knowledge, acceptability and information needs of parents

I am pleased to submit for your review a manuscript outlining the findings of a survey of parents’ experiences and satisfaction with a nationwide HPV vaccine campaign in Fiji.

There is a high burden of HPV and cervical cancer in the Pacific. The HPV vaccine has the potential to dramatically decrease the associated morbidity and mortality. However, experience in other settings has demonstrated that the HPV vaccine can be controversial and the disease is often poorly understood. The potential for vaccine introduction to reduce disease burden relies on community acceptance and uptake.

Having received a donation of HPV vaccine doses, Fiji undertook a one-off vaccine campaign targeting 9-12 year old girls. There is the first documented experience in a resource-limited Pacific country of community knowledge and understanding of cervical cancer, HPV and the HPV vaccine; and of community acceptance and attitudes towards vaccination of young girls with this relatively new vaccine. The relatively limited evidence that has been published on the acceptability and use of this vaccine in resource-poor countries describes attitudes towards hypothetical future vaccine introduction. In Fiji we had the opportunity to explore parental experiences and attitudes following an HPV vaccine campaign. Our findings highlight the critical role of effective community education and education in relation to HPV, cervical cancer and the vaccine.

With support from the GAVI Alliance now making introduction of HPV vaccine more feasible in resource-limited settings, there is a need for information on how communities respond to the vaccine, and what information and key messages are needed by parents to make an informed decision about vaccination for their children.

The findings we describe are very important for future HPV vaccine planning not only in Fiji and other Pacific Island Nations, but also in the Asia Pacific region more broadly.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sophie La Vincente

Please note revisions made as requested by Editorial office following 24 March submission:
• Line numbers have been added to the manuscript
• A separate Conclusion section now appears at the end of the Discussion