



# Sharp and to the point

Quarterly newsletter produced by the SA Immunisation Coordination Unit

## Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program 2007

Luda Molchanoff

**T**HE HPV VACCINE is highly effective in protecting against persistent infection with, and diseases caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV) types 16 and 18 which is responsible for over 70% of cervical cancers; and HPV types 6 and 11 which are responsible for approximately 90% of all genital warts.

The complete HPV vaccination course involves three intramuscular injections given at 0, 2 and 6 months.

If given prior to any exposure to the 4 HPV types contained in the vaccine, it is 95-100% effective in preventing

- pre cancerous cervical lesions,
- pre cancerous vaginal lesions
- vulval lesions and genital warts.

At the time of vaccination, women should be advised that the vaccine may be less effective if they have already been exposed to HPV before vaccination.

### South Australian Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program

The SA Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program will provide free HPV vaccines to females aged 12 to 26 years of age through the National Immunisation Program (NIP) over three separate stages.

**From April 2007:** free HPV vaccine will be provided as a part of the SA School Based Immunisation Program for:

- Females in Year 8 aged between 12 and 13 years of age (ongoing program)
- Females in Year 9 to 13 aged between 14 and 18 years of age (catch-up program).

**Please Note:** School aged females will be offered free HPV vaccine in either 2007 or 2008, depending on the local councils where they attend school. By the end of the 2008 school year, all females aged 12 to 18 years of age and attending school will have been offered free HPV vaccine.

The ongoing program for females in Year 8 (aged 12 to 13 years of age) will continue from 2009. Female students who missed a dose of HPV vaccine at school must attend a school immunisation provider clinic for follow-up.

**From July 2007:** until June 2009, free HPV vaccine will be available through General Practice and other community immunisation providers (including local councils) for:

## What's in this issue?

**O**UR FEATURE ARTICLE is an overview of the SA HPV immunisation program with some Q's and A's. This issue also includes articles on influenza vaccination for HCWs, a pilot project for residents and staff in aged care facilities, some short informative pieces for providers and we take a look at the Adverse Events reporting system in SA.

This newsletter is produced quarterly by the South Australian Immunisation Coordination Unit. If you have any questions, interests or concerns let us know.

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- Females aged 12 to 18 years of age who missed their doses during the SA school based immunisation program
- Females aged 18 to 26 years of age. The full course of three doses must be completed before the end of June 2009 and before the woman reaches 27 years of age.

### A National HPV Register

A National HPV Program Register is currently being developed by the Australian Government.



## Farewell to Trish

**I**T IS WITH DEEP REGRET that the Communicable Disease Control Branch bid farewell to a loved and highly respected colleague and friend. Trish Harris lost her brave battle with cancer on Tuesday 6 February 2007 aged 54yrs.

Trish worked for 4 years in the SAICU. She coordinated the

Meningococcal Vaccination program in SA which was part of the largest vaccination program in Australia. She contributed to the numerous resources that support the quality aspect of vaccine service provision in schools. She designed and developed the current vaccine schedule used by General Practitioners and nurse immunisers in SA. She managed the Influenza and Pneumococcal Vaccination program and worked on the development of the SA Health Care Worker Influenza program and the SA Mass Vaccination Plan in response to pandemic influenza.

## Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Program 2007 (cont.)

The National HPV Program Register will:

- Record their HPV vaccination status as well as measuring the effectiveness of the vaccine.
- Maintain records of all those vaccinated.
- Be used to send reminders to those who are overdue for doses.
- Send certificates to those who have completed their course.
- Send information to all those on the Register, if booster doses are required.
- link data later with the Cervical Screening Registers

### For further information

- National HPV Vaccination Program website: [www.health.gov.au/internet/standby/publishing.nsf/Content/home](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/standby/publishing.nsf/Content/home)
- Fact sheets at [www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au](http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au)
- National Cervical Screening Program website: [www.cancerscreening.gov.au](http://www.cancerscreening.gov.au)
- National Immunisation Infoline on 1800 671 811
- SAICU Telephone: (08) 8226 7177

## Health Care Worker (HCW) Flu Vaccination

by Julia Waddington-Powell

THE 2007 HCW VACCINATION PROGRAM (Department of Health) was launched in February. Around 60 program coordinators across SA attended and had the opportunity to preview the 'Model Documents for the SA Health Care Worker Annual Influenza Program'. The documents were developed to support existing services in health care settings and provide a guide to those facilities starting a staff influenza program. They are available online at [www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/](http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/) under 'immunisation'.

### Why is flu vaccination important for HCWs?

- 1.2 million Australians aged 18-64 are in 'at-risk' groups because they have a chronic disease such as diabetes, kidney failure, cancer or severe asthma
- Only 42% of those 'at-risk' are being vaccinated against influenza
- People with a single chronic condition such as heart disease have a 40 times more risk of death from influenza
- For people with heart + lung disease risk is increased 800 times

HCWs are at risk themselves and risk spreading this highly contagious disease to patients at high risk.

### Want more information and resources?

[www.fightflu.com.au](http://www.fightflu.com.au) and [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)

## Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine Questions & Answers

PARENTS AND PROVIDERS have been requesting information on the HPV vaccine and the SA program. An information pamphlet for parents will be sent with the School Based Immunisation Program consent forms and the Commonwealth pamphlet can be read on line at the website for the National HPV Vaccination Program [www.health.gov.au/internet/standby/publishing.nsf/Content/home](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/standby/publishing.nsf/Content/home). These are some of the questions addressed in these pamphlet.

### How safe is HPV vaccine?

The vaccine was shown to be safe during clinical trials.

Minor side effects were experienced such as redness, pain and swelling at the injection side. Other common side effects may also include a headache, temperature or nausea. All AEFI need to be reported SAICU- 8226 7177.

HPV vaccine should not be given to those who are pregnant or have had a serious allergic reaction to yeast or any other vaccine component. For information on vaccine side effects please refer to the SAICU HPV SDO online at [www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/immunisation-index.htm](http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/immunisation-index.htm), to the Product Information and the HPV fact sheet [www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au](http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au)

### What if exposure to HPV occurs between doses?

Exposure to any of the four HPV types covered by the vaccine before the three doses are completed may slightly lessen the effect of the vaccine. The full course of the vaccine should still be completed.

### Is there any benefit in receiving the vaccine where there is a history of genital warts and/or an abnormal Pap smear?

There can still be benefit from HPV vaccine even where there has been previous genital warts and or/an abnormal Pap smear result, as the HPV type that caused the infection may be different from the type contained in the HPV vaccine.

**Regular Pap smears are still essential because the HPV vaccine does not prevent all cervical cancers.**

### Why is the HPV vaccine recommended to be given to girls as young as 12 years?

Studies have shown that the best immune response to the vaccine is achieved in girls as young as 9 years of age. It is also most effective at preventing HPV if administered prior to exposure to HPV.

### Is HPV vaccine available for boys?

GARDASIL® has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for males aged 9-15 years. However, research into the effectiveness of the vaccine in preventing the HPV infection and related diseases in men has not been completed.

The HPV vaccine is not funded for males and is available only through pharmacies by prescription from general practitioners.



Barbara Amos (Aboriginal Health Worker) receiving her Flu vaccine being given by Monique Porter, Pika Wiya Health Service.

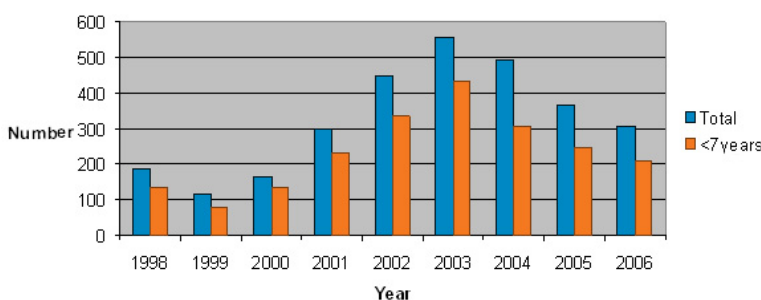
on 1 November 2005. Figure 1 shows the comparison of AE reports for children < 7 years of age compared with the overall total as a percentage indicating reports for this age group reflect the increased number of vaccines given to this age group on the NIP.

Influences on the AE report numbers in Figure 1 include

- Removal of the 18 month DTP vaccination in September 2003 and the corresponding gradual decreases in the reporting rates can be related to the decrease in the number of Injection Site Reactions (ISR) reported. Children born after the 1st March 2002 would have received only 4 doses of DTPa vaccine by 4 years of age. The age cohort receiving 5 doses of DTPa vaccines would have been those turning 4 years of age before the 1st March 2006; this is reflected in the lower numbers of ISR in 2006 compared with 2005 where most children would have previously received an 18 month DTPa vaccine.
- Commencement of the Meningococcal C program in 2003 as a catch-up program in schools over a 3 year period.
- Introduction from 1st January 2005 of universal programs for Pneumococcal conjugate vaccines for children < 2 years of age and Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccines for all Australians >65 years of age.
- Introduction on 1st November 2005 of IPV combination vaccines, in SA - DTP/IPV, Varicella vaccine at 18 months of age and hepatitis A for indigenous children at 18 months and 2 years of age.

2006 saw no new vaccines or changes as providers become more familiar with the current vaccine side effects.

**Figure 1. Total AEFI reports for South Australia**



## Influenza programs

### Immunisation in Residential Aged Care Facilities (RACF)

Deirdre Doe

‘**I**MMUNISATION IN AGED CARE’ is a pilot program being conducted in 2007 by SAICU and supported by the Divisions of General Practice (ANEDGP, ANDGP, SDGP) and 25 RACF’s in SA. The project aims to support RACF’s in providing immunisation services to residents and staff. Producing ‘best practice’ guidelines and policies to promote and improve immunisation coverage rates amongst the elderly and their carers

The program includes immunisation education and training for nurses and supports the RACFs in storing, recording and administrating influenza and pneumococcal vaccines. In the event of an influenza pandemic, nurses working in aged care who are trained in immunisation can provide vaccines to those most at risk.

## The South Australian AEFI Reporting System

by Cathy McInnes (SAICU)

**I**N SOUTH AUSTRALIA IMMUNISATION SERVICE PROVIDERS, parents or vaccinees and others are encouraged to report any serious or unexpected adverse events to SAICU as the reporting enables the ongoing monitoring of the safety of vaccines by:

- Assisting in identifying those children who should receive follow-up vaccination under close medical supervision.
- Allow a comparison between the expected and observed rates of known vaccine adverse events.
- Provide a signal for adverse events which are unexpected and which require further investigation to ascertain if these events are vaccine related.
- Measuring if there is an increase in known adverse events.
- Collation of the data and feedback to the public re the continued safety of vaccines.

Immunisation service providers are encouraged to give all vaccinees a ‘Vaccine Safety’ leaflet, developed by SAICU, at each immunisation encounter. Parents provide the highest number of AE reports in SA with 46.3% in 2005 and 47.4% in 2006. The Child & Youth Health Parent Helpline responds to AE reports made after 5pm.1300 364 100. The AE reporting form is available online at [www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/immunisation-index.htm](http://www.dh.sa.gov.au/pehs/immunisation-index.htm) or ring the SAICU on Ph: 8226 7177

2006 was the first full reporting year following the introduction of the new NIP schedule which commenced

## STOP PRESS

**T**HE ACTING MINISTER for Health and Ageing, Christopher Pyne announced on Wednesday 28th March funding for Rotavirus vaccine to be included on the NIP schedule from July 1st 2007 for children born on or after the 1st May 2007.

SAICU is planning resources and Information evenings, for GP's and other providers in May and June, to include the HPV program and the introduction of Rotavirus to the NIP.

The July 2007 edition of 'Sharp and to the Point' will contain information on the Rotavirus program and rollout.

### Staff movements



SAICU would like to wish Sue Lewis every success in her new position. Her knowledge and expertise over the last 6 years in SAICU has contributed to the success of the Immunisation Program in SA.

### Did You Know??

1. The 'National Vaccine Storage Guidelines' p25 recommend advising the person who purchases a vaccine by script to get it from the pharmacist immediately before attending the GP for vaccination.
2. Medicare Australia is no longer supporting the old HIC web address. Providers are advised to update their ACIR website address to [www.medicareaustralia.gov.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au)
3. Free Meningococcal vaccine for people born from 1/1/1984 will continue until June 30th 2007. From this date Meningococcal C vaccine will be for funded only for children at 12 months of age on the NIP - born on or after 1 January 2002.
4. The DRAFT of the 9th Edition Australian Immunisation Handbook has been available for community consultation on the 'Immunise Australia' website [www.immunise.health.gov.au/](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/). Additional chapters on HPV and Rotavirus vaccines are included.

### Rewarding Providers

**S**AICU recognises the quality work occurring across the State and wants to commend and reward the effort providers are making towards the SA Immunisation program. Each quarter SAICU will send a 'David Jones' quality produce pack to the provider who best fits the values of innovation and best practice in immunisation. Please send nominations to your Local Immunisation Coordinator or Cathy McInnes ph 8226 7177 or email: [cathlyn.mcinnnes@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:cathlyn.mcinnnes@health.sa.gov.au)

Send us your nominations soon!!

# 1 2 3

### Remember!

The Immunisation Calculator— it's as easy as 1, 2, 3!  
[www.healthsa.sa.gov.au/immunisationcalculator/](http://www.healthsa.sa.gov.au/immunisationcalculator/)

### Maintaining the Vaccine Cold Chain with Cold Chain Monitoring Cards (CCM)

**T**HE 'COLD CHAIN' is the system for transporting and storing vaccines between 2°C and 8°C.

CCM cards or Freeze Sensitive Monitoring Cards contain a 'Freeze Watch Indicator' adhered to orange paper. The 'indicator' is enclosed in a specially designed ampoule with dark blue liquid.



If the CCM card is exposed to freezing temperatures (at or below 0°C) the ampoule cracks and the blue liquid inside leaks and stains the paper behind.

When it is not obvious if a freezing temperature has been reached:

- Look closely for an air bubble in the ampoule. If you can not see an air bubble this suggests freezing temperatures have been reached.
- Remove the CCM card and vigorously tap the bottom edge on a hard surface 3 times. If the paper stains it was exposed to freezing temperatures. (Tapping will not cause colour staining in an unexposed indicator).

The CCM cards have a Lot code. For example: "2008-07" on a card: represents the year of expiration and month the CCM card expires

A stamped date on the CCM card indicates when the vaccines are distributed from the Vaccine Warehouse to immunisation providers.

If there has been a 'cold chain breach' isolate the vaccines affected, mark 'do not use' and contact SAICU or your LIC for further advice. The SAICU policy for 'Management and Storage of Vaccines' 2007 is available online at [www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/](http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/) Please contact SAICU or LIC for CCM cards.

## Immunisation Questions & Answers

**Q** A two year old non-indigenous child has had a course of Prevenar vaccination; do they have a dose of Pneumovax 23 at 2 years of age?

**A** The dose of pneumovax 23 is scheduled for Indigenous children at 2 years of age in SA and 'Medically at Risk' children at 4 years of age. This child will not require the Pneumovax 23 vaccine. Since January 2005 all Australian children have been eligible for Prevenar vaccine at 2, 4 and 6 months of age.