

Improving HPV vaccination acceptability by a web-based tailored intervention

Citation for published version (APA):

Pot, M. (2018). *Improving HPV vaccination acceptability by a web-based tailored intervention*. [Doctoral Thesis, Maastricht University]. Maastricht University. <https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20181005mp>

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2018

DOI:

[10.26481/dis.20181005mp](https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20181005mp)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Please check the document version of this publication:

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VALORIZATION ADDENDUM

This section describes the social and economic relevance of this research project in addition to the scientific relevance. This will be done by pointing out the relevance of the project and the Web-based tailored intervention (i.e., the final product), the target groups, the innovative aspect of the intervention, and how the results are currently being implemented.

As is explained in this PhD thesis, since 2010, Dutch 12-year-old girls are invited to receive the vaccination against Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) on a yearly basis. Infection with HPV can cause cervical cancer. However, HPV vaccination uptake remains to be low (i.e., 46% in 2017). The uptake needs to be improved in order to reduce the cervical cancer burden. This thesis generates insight into the systematical development and evaluation of a Web-based, tailored educational intervention (with virtual assistants) promoting HPV vaccination acceptability among mothers of invited girls. The intervention has the potential to improve HPV vaccination acceptability and informed decision-making, to decrease decisional conflict, as well as to motivate HPV vaccination uptake among mothers of invited girls. In addition, the Web-based, tailored intervention has potential for broad scale dissemination and implementation at relatively low costs. Therefore, it can have substantial impact at the Dutch population level.

The results of the studies are of interest for several target groups. First, for mothers of invited girls because the intervention can help them (and their daughters) making an informed decision about HPV vaccination. Second, for invited girls themselves and their (other) relatives, because vaccinated girls have a decreased risk of getting infected with HPV and developing cervical cancer later in life. Third, for stakeholders in policy (i.e., the ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, RIVM, the Dutch Health Council, and Netherlands Centre of Youth and Health), because vaccination pursues their goal of decreasing morbidity, mortality, and socioeconomic costs associated with cervical cancer cases. Besides, RIVM is now able to improve their effort in promoting HPV vaccination acceptability by implementing this evidence-based educational intervention. Finally, health care professionals may feel supported and strengthened in the delivery of the HPV vaccination.

The intervention can be called highly innovative, because of the selected behavioral change techniques, including the use of virtual assistants, which were combined within a Web-based tailored program promoting HPV vaccination acceptance. And so far, this is the first intervention promoting HPV vaccination acceptability that has been successfully developed in a systematic manner by using the Intervention Mapping protocol.

As the intervention appeared effective, it will be incorporated into the national HPV vaccination communication from 2019 onwards. There have been several meetings between TNO, Maastricht University, and RIVM to prepare the implementation of the Web-based tailored education. The intervention has recently been transferred from TNO to RIVM; they now have full control and management over the website. The website is already accessible at a secured platform, but will soon become free available for the general public. Hosting costs are low, especially compared to the large groups of people that can be reached by the intervention. When it has become publicly available, time and money remain necessary for keeping content up-to-date and for monitoring use and effectiveness of the intervention. One of the spin offs could be the development of similar educational interventions targeting other childhood vaccinations and/or other target groups. Furthermore, we apply for a quality assessment by The Centre for Healthy Living (in Dutch: Centrum Gezond Leven, CGL) with the aim to include the intervention into their intervention database. This will promote knowledge-awareness about the availability of the intervention among professionals in health promotion practice and research and provide them leads for the development of interventions. And, this will contribute to the development of a cumulative knowledge base in promoting HPV vaccination acceptability.

This PhD thesis will be made available online in order to distribute and share the insights that we have established with this research project. Hardcopies will also be distributed among academics and among stakeholders that could benefit from the Web-based tailored educational intervention (e.g., the municipal health services, general practices, and hospitals). Also, there have already been several presentations at (inter)national conferences and publications to promote dissemination of the results of this research project.