Published on *Treatment Action Campaign* (http://tac.org.za/community)

TAC issues global call for affordable access to HPV vaccines in the developing world

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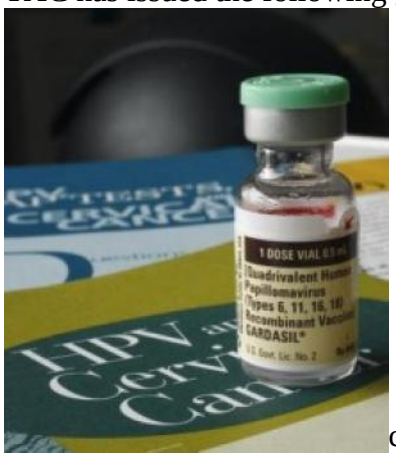
Created *2008/10/28 - 10:38am*
28 October, 2008 - 10:38 ? moderator

TAC has issued the following global call for affordable access to HPV vaccines in non-OECD (developing)



countries. Copies of the statement below will be delivered to representatives of Merck and GlaxoSmithKline, the manufactures and patent-holders of the Gardasil© and Ceravix© HPV vaccines , respectively, in the near future. We ask individuals and organisations to please add their sign-ons to this important campaign:

"This is a request to reduce the price of the vaccine to $10.00 for all non-OECD countries. It is our firm belief that in the long-run the volumes generated by global access will ensure a reasonable profit for your shareholders. But, above all, this will save countless lives of women and girls now.

We also request that your companies co-operate with the public health sector to undertake efficacy trials in men and boys with a focus on MSM.

- *The Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) welcomed the registration of GlaxoSmithKline?s prophylactic human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine Ceravix by the South African Medicines Control Council (MCC) earlier this year. This followed the registration by Food and Drug Administration. These vaccines are life-saving. However, they are not available to women in South Africa and non-OECD countries because of excessive pricing.*
- *HPV and cervical cancer is common among women in South Africa and was the leading cause of cancer deaths (3498) in 2000 alone. Women throughout the world face a crisis with cervical cancer. It is the second most common cancer amongst women worldwide and the principal cause of cancer amongst women in Africa. Yet, an HPV-16/-18 vaccine would theoretically prevent 71% of cervical cancers worldwide and 67.7% in Africa.*
- *Epidemiological evidence clearly indicates that high-risk types of human papillomavirus (HPV) are the principal cause of invasive cervical cancer. The global prevalence of HPV in cervical carcinomas has been reported to be 99.7%.*
- *Clinical studies have shown that both Ceravix (GlaxoSmithKline) and Gardasil (Merck) effectively prevent persistent HPV infection. They demonstrate vaccine efficacy in the order of 98% to 100% related to HPV types 16 and 18, as well as offer partial protection against other HPV type infections.*

- *Women living with HIV/AIDS are at elevated risk of HPV infection and cervical cancer at least 3-5 times more likely to be infected as HIV-negative women. In particular, there is an increased probability that HPV infection will become persistent in women living with HIV and evolve into precancerous and cancerous lesions.*
- *Screening programmes for cervical cancer serves as a fundamental means of both reducing the prevalence of cervical cancer, and the mortality rate of cervical cancer in women.*
- *Currently, the price of the Cervarix and Gardasil in South Africa ranges from R2100 to R2310 for the three necessary shots. This cost is prohibitive in both the public and private sectors in South Africa. The vast majority of women in South Africa have an income that is less than R1500.00 per month. Together with the need to vaccinate adult women in our society, in families where there are two or three children that may need vaccination, the costs may amount to the annual income of a household. This is also true in the broader context of disadvantaged women around the globe especially in Africa, Asia, the Carribean and Central and South America.*
- *At the current price, neither the public health system nor the private sector medical insurance industry can afford to provide access to those who need it.*
- *This is a request to reduce the price of the vaccine to $10.00 for all non-OECD countries. It is our firm belief that in the long-run the volumes generated by global access will ensure a reasonable profit for your shareholders.*
- *In addition, the HPV vaccine has not been tested in men and boys, this is particularly important for Men who have sex with Men (MSM) and gay men. The data shows a an elevated risk of HPV in MSM and gay men and particularly those with HIV infection.*
- *We also request that your companies co-operate with the public health sector to undertake efficacy trials in men and boys with a focus on MSM.*

We are aware that your representatives will meet with the Treatment Action Campaign and we ask that you consider these demands favourably in order to save lives of women, men and children in poor and medium income developing countries".

To endorse this call or for media comment please contact:

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Source URL (retrieved on *2017/04/30 - 1:06pm*): http://tac.org.za/community/node/2428