



Victorian Cervical
Cytology Registry



19 November 2013

Dear Japanese colleagues

I am very saddened to hear that the HPV vaccination program has been halted in Japan. As you are aware Australia was one of the first countries to introduce a national HPV vaccination program in 2007 and we are already seeing marked falls in cervical abnormality rates due to vaccination, as we have recently published in BMC Medicine (Gertig et al BMC Medicine 2013). As with many new vaccines, we also had some media attention in Australia about potential side effects, which were proven to be psychogenic in nature. These were promptly handled by public health professionals and the public was reassured about the safety of the vaccine.

We feel we have a particularly close connection with our Japanese friends, who have visited us in Melbourne and it has been a pleasure to exchange information on the best approaches to cervical cancer prevention. Japan is a wealthy country and it is a great shame that participation in cervical cancer screening is at such low levels. This makes it even more imperative that an effective vaccination program is implemented so that at least young Japanese women are protected from this fully preventable disease. I hope there is a way to convince Japanese parents about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine so that their children may benefit from this important advance in cancer prevention.

Please let me know if I can assist in any way

With best wishes

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