

# What's New in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

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A resource provided by Mr. R. A. K. JAIYESIMI  
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## HPV vaccination becomes a reality

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women worldwide and it kills about 400 women a year. Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection is associated with cervical cancer and vaccination against the virus became available in the UK in September 2008 to girls aged 12-13 years.

The vaccine, Cervarix is the preferred vaccine by the Department of Health. It is licensed for use in the prevention of high-grade cervical dysplasia (CIN 2/3) and cervical cancer causally related to HPV types 16 and 18. The vaccine guards against these two strains of the HPV virus that cause 70% of cases of cervical cancer. The recommended vaccination schedule is 0, 1 and 6 months. The duration of protection has not fully been established.

The most common adverse reaction observed after vaccine administration was injection site pain. The majority of these reactions were of mild to moderate severity and were not long lasting. Common side effects include headaches, myalgia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain.

Healthcare practitioners should continue to advise sexually active teenagers to use condoms as this protects against other sexually transmitted infections.

## Caution for Pregnant Women Taking Antibiotics

A study published in *The Lancet* on September 18 2008 found that the prescription of erythromycin for women in spontaneous preterm labour with intact membranes was associated with an increase in functional impairment among their children at seven years of age. The risk of cerebral palsy was increased by either erythromycin or co-amoxiclav. These unexpected findings are the results of a study of long-term follow-up data from the ORACLE Children's Study.

Could this finding be extrapolated to the use of antibiotics in pregnancy for other conditions? The RCOG advises that these findings do not mean that antibiotics are unsafe for use in pregnancy.

Antibiotics should be used if there are definite indications for the prevention of maternal or neonatal infection.

Mr. Rotimi A K JAIYESIMI

### Practice Address:

North Tyneside Hospital

Wansbeck General Hospital

Newcastle Nuffield Hospital