

One dose of vaccine could cut risk of cervical cancer

Kat Lay

One dose of the HPV vaccine may be enough to protect girls against cervical cancer, a study has suggested.

The vaccine is routinely offered to girls aged 11 and 12 in year eight at schools in England, and is given as two injections between 6 and 24 months apart. The researchers looked at participants in two large phase 3 trials of Cer-

varix, a vaccine against human papillomavirus (HPV) made by Glaxo-SmithKline.

Many had not completed the three doses recommended in the trial, mainly because the women involved in the research had become pregnant.

The study, published in *The Lancet Oncology*, found that the vaccine appeared to be highly efficient against HPV infection, even in women who

had received only one or two doses. Women in the study were followed for an average of four years.

Aimée Kreimer, of the National Cancer Institute, in Maryland, the co-lead author of the study, said: "Our findings question the number of HPV vaccine doses truly needed to protect the majority of women.

"If one dose is sufficient, it could reduce vaccination and administration

costs as well as improve uptake. This is especially important in less developed regions of the world."

Julia Brotherton, of the Victorian Cervical Cytology Registry in Melbourne, said that delivering the vaccines as one dose could substantially cut cervical cancer worldwide. Single-dose vaccine campaigns were more achievable than annual programmes even in poor countries, she said.