

1 **Impact of Quadrivalent HPV Vaccine Dose Spacing on Immunologic Response in**
2 **Women Living with HIV**

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66 **Abstract**

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68 HPV vaccination schedules have changed as evidence has supported reduced dosing and
69 extended intervals. Women living with HIV (WLWH) represent an important population
70 with no data on alternative dosing.

71 Girls and WLWH received quadrivalent HPV (qHPV) vaccine in a pan-Canadian study
72 of immunogenicity and efficacy. Serology was performed at months 0/2/7/12/18/24.

73 Medical and sexual history was collected throughout. Linear regression was used to
74 determine if spacing of doses was associated with peak antibody titer.

75 Multivariable analyses demonstrated significant relationships between peak antibody titer
76 and time to blood draw post last vaccine dose, naivety to the relevant HPV type, and HIV
77 viral load for all qHPV types. There was a significant relationship between peak
78 HPV16/18 antibody titer and age.

79 Taking age, time to serology, CD4 cell count, CD4 nadir, HIV viral load, and HPV
80 naivety into account, spacing of the three qHPV vaccine doses did not significantly
81 impact peak antibody titers.

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89 **Background**

90 Human papillomavirus vaccines are safe, immunogenic, and effective [1]. Initial
91 dose schedules for quadrivalent, bivalent, and nonavalent formulations recommended
92 three doses administered at months zero, one or two, and six [2]. However, more recent
93 data have shown that young individuals who receive only two doses, and perhaps one
94 dose, develop non-inferior peak antibody titers and may be adequately protected against
95 persistent HPV infection and HPV-associated disease [3, 4]. Additionally, studies have
96 shown that expanding the time frame of the three-dose schedule or delaying the second or
97 third dose results in non-inferior immune responses in immunocompetent populations [5-
98 8]. Reduced-dose schedules can greatly expand the financial feasibility of HPV
99 vaccination globally and will help reach the global target of cervical cancer elimination
100 [9].

101 Given the global goal of cervical cancer elimination, consideration of all female
102 populations is critical. A group of particular importance in achieving this goal is women
103 living with HIV (WLWH). WLWH have higher rates of persistent HPV infection, as well
104 as an increased rate of HPV-associated disease [10-12]. In addition, countries with high
105 rates of HIV also frequently have low rates of cervical cancer screening, and therefore are
106 in the greatest need of simple, affordable vaccine schedules. The quadrivalent HPV
107 (qHPV) vaccine has been shown to be safe, immunogenic, and efficacious in WLWH to
108 date, with the greatest immune response seen in WLWH with undetectable HIV viral
109 loads [13, 14]. However, to our knowledge, no study to date has evaluated the effect of
110 qHPV vaccine dose spacing in this important population. In this study, we assess the
111 effect of differential dose spacing of the qHPV vaccine on immunogenicity in WLWH.

112

113 **Methods**

114 Individuals aged nine and greater with a uterine cervix were recruited from 14
115 clinics serving WLWH across Canada between 2008-2012. The primary objective was to
116 assess immunogenicity of the qHPV vaccine. The study population and methods of
117 enrolment have been previously described [14]. Participants provided informed consent
118 and were scheduled to receive three doses of qHPV vaccine intramuscularly at month
119 0/2/6. Serology was performed at month 0/2/7/12/18/24 by cLIA assay at Merck
120 Research Laboratories.

121 The objective of this analysis was to determine if the spacing of qHPV vaccine
122 doses had an impact on the peak antibody titer achieved in WLWH. Peak antibody titer
123 was defined as the highest anti-HPV antibody titer achieved in a participant, for each
124 HPV type, post-vaccination. Peak titer was chosen as an endpoint as it is a measure of
125 maximal vaccine response and is associated with protection against disease endpoints
126 [15]. Peak antibody titer was natural log transformed prior to analysis. Participants were
127 divided into six groups based on vaccine spacing: one dose, two doses, three doses within
128 seven months, three doses within seven months to one year, three doses within one to two
129 years, and three doses over more than two years. We used Chi squared tests for trend for
130 categorical variables and Spearman's rank correlation for continuous variables to assess
131 differences in participant characteristics between vaccine spacing categories. Univariable
132 and multivariable linear regression was performed for each qHPV type to examine if the
133 spacing of the vaccine doses impacted the peak log titer for each HPV type. Linear
134 regression models included potential confounders: age at first dose, time to blood draw

135 following last dose, CD4 count and HIV viral load at first vaccine dose, CD4 nadir, and
136 naivety to the HPV type. We also ran a sensitivity analysis excluding participants aged
137 <14 years.

138

139 **Results**

140 The participants who received one dose (n=6), two doses (n=4), and three doses
141 over greater than two years (n=5) were removed from analysis due to low numbers.
142 Participants who did not have serology performed after their last dose of vaccine were
143 also removed due to the inability to assess the endpoint of interest (n=31). After these
144 exclusions, 307 participants were eligible for analysis (Table 1). The median age was 36
145 years (IQR: 26-44). Participants were predominantly of Black (47%) and White (32%)
146 ethnicity. Four percent of participants had CD4 counts below 200 cells/mm³ at baseline
147 (time of first vaccination) and 50% had CD4 counts above 500 cells/mm³. Sixty-six
148 percent of participants had HIV plasma viral loads <50 copies/ml at baseline. Sixty-five
149 percent of participants were naïve to HPV16 at baseline and median peak HPV16 log titer
150 among all participants was 7.7 (IQR: 6.9-8.4).

151 Two hundred and twenty-nine participants received three doses of vaccine within
152 seven months, 56 received three doses within seven months to one year, and 22 received
153 three doses within one to two years. Variables of interest were not significantly different
154 between spacing categories (Table 1) with the exception of baseline CD4 count, naivety
155 to HPV11, and time to blood draw post last vaccine dose. CD4 counts and rates of
156 naivety to HPV11 decreased in the groups as the vaccine spacing increased. There was a
157 similar but not significant trend for HPV16 naivety but no clear trend in HPV6 and 18.

158 The time to blood draw post last dose was significantly greater as the vaccine spacing
159 increased.

160 Univariable linear regression results suggested that HIV viral load detectability
161 and time to blood draw were significantly associated with peak antibody titer for all
162 qHPV types (Table 2). Peak antibody titers were 41-64% lower on average, depending on
163 qHPV type, in participants with detectable HIV viral loads, compared to those with
164 undetectable HIV viral loads. As time between last vaccine dose and blood draw for
165 serology increased, peak antibody response decreased, as expected based on immune titer
166 dynamics. For all qHPV types aside from 16, previously exposure to the relevant HPV
167 type was associated with 60-98% higher peak antibody titers, depending on qHPV type.
168 The same trend was present for HPV16 although it did not reach significance. Higher
169 baseline CD4 count was significantly associated with higher peak antibody titers for
170 HPV16 and 18. Additionally, older age was associated with lower peak antibody titers for
171 HPV16 only. Wider dose spacing was associated with lower peak antibody titers for
172 HPV18; participants who received all doses within 7 months to 1 year had non-
173 significantly higher peak antibody titers but participants who received all doses within 1
174 to 2 years had significantly lower peak antibody titers.

175 Multivariable linear regression yielded a significant relationship for all qHPV
176 types between peak antibody titer and HIV viral load, naivety to the relevant HPV type,
177 and time to blood draw (Table 2). Of note, there were no significant associations between
178 peak antibody titers and spacing of vaccine doses in multivariable analysis. Participants
179 with detectable HIV viral loads had peak antibody titers that were 39-64% lower on
180 average, depending on qHPV type. Participants who were previously exposed to the

181 relevant HPV type had peak antibody titers that were 44-77% higher on average,
182 depending on qHPV type, compared to naïve participants. As time between last vaccine
183 dose and blood draw for serology increased, peak antibody response decreased. There
184 was also a significant relationship between peak antibody titer and age, but only for
185 HPV16 and 18, in which lower age was associated with higher peak antibody response.

186 A sensitivity analysis excluded 33 girls aged ≤ 13 to assess the impact of age in the
187 non-pediatric subset of the cohort. Girls aged ≤ 13 were not analyzed separately due to
188 low numbers and lack of diversity of dosing schedules (31 girls had all doses within
189 seven months and two girls had all doses within seven months to one year). After
190 removing girls aged ≤ 13 , the median age was 37 (IQR: 31-44, n=274). The proportion of
191 all other characteristics described in Table 1 did not significantly change. Multivariable
192 linear regression of this non-pediatric subset demonstrated a significant relationship
193 between peak antibody titer and time to blood draw, naivety to the relevant HPV type,
194 and HIV viral load for all qHPV types, as it had for the full population. Again, there was
195 no significant association between peak antibody titer and spacing of vaccine doses.
196 There remained a significant relationship between peak antibody titer and age, only for
197 HPV18.

198

199 **Discussion**

200 Of most importance to this analysis, vaccine dose spacing did not appear to be
201 associated with peak antibody response in multivariable analyses for all qHPV types.
202 Although peak log titers do appear to decrease slightly in median value as doses become
203 more widely spaced, particularly for HPV16 and 18 (Table 1), the difference is not

204 significant and can be accounted for by other variables in the models. The variables that
205 did reach significance in our models are much more important to achieving a high
206 antibody level in WLWH. Assay variability for the cLIA ranges based on HPV type from
207 16-23% relative standard deviation [16], such that the percentage differences we
208 observed were well above this cutoff range. This suggests that our findings are not purely
209 the result of assay variability.

210 Time to blood draw, naivety to the relevant HPV type, and HIV viral load were
211 important predictors of peak antibody response in univariable, multivariable, and
212 sensitivity analyses. The relationship between age and peak antibody response was less
213 clearly defined, with age not a significant predictor of antibody response to HPV6, 11,
214 but a significant predictor of antibody response to HPV16 and 18. A previous study in
215 women without HIV has noted the same association between increasing age and
216 decreasing peak HPV18 antibody titer [17]. Additionally, this finding is supported by
217 biological understandings of immune system changes with age, resulting in reduced
218 immunogenicity to many vaccines [18]. The relationship between time to blood draw
219 following last vaccine dose and peak antibody titer was expected due to known antibody
220 titer dynamics [19] and therefore needed to be included in the models. Additionally, the
221 relationship between naivety to the relevant HPV type and peak antibody titer was also
222 expected based on prior data demonstrating higher antibody titers post-vaccination
223 among women who are seropositive from natural exposure prior to vaccination [20, 21].

224 We were limited in our ability to assess the impact of reduced dose schedules in
225 this cohort due to high vaccine schedule adherence leading to small numbers of
226 participants in the one and two-dose groups. Due to the fact that most participants

227 received all doses within seven months, further studies are needed to confirm our finding
228 that the spacing of three dose schedules, up to a range of two years, does not
229 meaningfully impact peak antibody response. Additional studies are also needed to assess
230 the immunogenicity of one and two-dose schedules in WLWH. An additional limitation
231 of this analysis was the use of antibody titers as a surrogate outcome in place of infection
232 and disease endpoints, but low rates of these endpoints precluded their use.

233 These findings are critical to vaccine programming and provision globally. Our
234 analysis suggests that deviations in dose spacing up to two years do not meaningfully
235 impact peak antibody titer; therefore, restarting the vaccine schedule or adding an
236 additional dose in these situations is not needed. As previously described [14], achieving
237 an undetectable HIV viral load should be a key goal not only for HIV disease control and
238 transmission prevention but also to achieve optimal HPV vaccine immune response.
239 Additionally, these findings pertain to WLWH, who accounted for approximately 17.4
240 million of the women aged ≥ 15 globally in 2014 [22]. Reaching the global target of
241 cervical cancer elimination will require specific intervention targeting this important
242 subset of women who experience a much higher burden of HPV and cervical cancer.

243

244 **Conclusions**

245 Taking into account age, time to serology, CD4 cell count, CD4 nadir, HIV viral
246 load, and HPV naivety, spacing of the three qHPV vaccine doses did not significantly
247 impact peak anti-HPV antibody titers.

248

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281 **Disclosure of Interests**

282 Ms. McClymont has no conflicts.

283 Dr. Ogilvie is a co-investigator on an investigator-led trial funded by Hologic Inc and
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322 **Details of Ethics Approval**

323

324 Ethical approval for central study coordination was obtained from the University of
325 British Columbia Clinical Research Ethics Board (approval H08-00997) and all recruiting
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327

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399

400 Table 1. Participant characteristics by vaccine spacing category
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Characteristic	Within 7 months (n=229)	7 months-1 year (n=56)	1 to 2 years (n=22)	Chi squared test for trend or Spearman's rank coefficient test (p value)	All participants (n=307)
Baseline age (years)+	37 (23-44)	35 (30-38)	36 (30-40)	0.47	36 (26-44)
Baseline CD4 count (cells/mm ³)					
<200	7 (3%)	4 (7%)	2 (9%)	0.02	13 (4%)
200-500	86 (38%)	24 (43%)	12 (55%)		122 (40%)
>500	122 (53%)	25 (45%)	8 (36%)		155 (50%)
Baseline CD4 nadir (cells/mm ³)+	240 (122-370)	255 (160-356)	200 (80-320)	0.64	240 (122-365)
Baseline HIV viral load undetectable (<50 copies/mL)					
Yes	158 (69%)	33 (59%)	13 (59%)	0.09	204 (66%)
No	58 (25%)	18 (32%)	9 (41%)		85 (28%)
Unknown	13 (6%)	5 (9%)	0		18 (6%)
Naïve to HPV6	149 (65%)	27 (49%)	14 (64%)	0.71	102 (33%)
Naïve to HPV11	195 (85%)	39 (70%)	13 (59%)	<0.01	206 (67%)
Naïve to HPV16	155 (68%)	35 (63%)	11 (50%)	0.09	201 (65%)
Naïve to HPV18	197 (86%)	40 (71%)	19 (86%)	0.43	215 (70%)
Time to blood draw post-last dose (days)+	31 (28-39)	43 (30-100)	80.5 (41-177)	<0.001	34 (28-46)
Peak HPV6 log titer+	6.4 (5.5-7.1)	6.7 (5.6-7.3)	6.1 (5.2-7.1)	0.57	6.4 (5.5-7.2)
Peak HPV11 log titer+	6.4 (5.8-7.1)	6.5 (5.8-7.1)	6.3 (5.5-6.6)	0.57	6.4 (5.8-7.1)
Peak HPV16 log titer+	7.8 (7.1-8.4)	7.6 (6.7-8.4)	7.2 (5.6-8.0)	0.05	7.7 (6.9-8.4)
Peak HPV18 log titer+	5.9 (4.8-6.8)	5.8 (4.8-6.7)	5.1 (4.2-5.8)	0.14	5.8(4.8-6.7)

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403 + median, interquartile range

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412 Table 2. Univariable and multivariable linear regression results for each HPV type

413 assessing the impact of each variable on peak HPV log titer.

	Univariable linear regression				Multivariable linear regression			
HPV6								
Variable	P value	β^a	Exp β^b	95% CI ^c	P value	β	Exp β	95% CI
Baseline age (years, in increments of 10)	0.07	-0.10	0.91	0.82-1.01	0.11	-0.12	0.88	0.75-1.03
Baseline CD4 count (cells/mm ³)								
<200	0.29	Ref	Ref	-	0.77	Ref	Ref	-
200-500		0.34	1.41	0.70-2.85		0.25	1.29	0.63-2.61
>500		0.49	1.63	0.81-3.28		0.23	1.26	0.61-2.61
Baseline CD4 nadir (cells/mm ³ , in increments of 100)	0.58	0.02	1.02	0.95-1.09	0.87	-0.008	0.99	0.90-1.09
Baseline HIV viral load undetectable (<50 copies/mL)								
Yes	<0.001	Ref	Ref	-	0.005	Ref	Ref	-
No		-0.52	0.59	0.44-0.80		0.49	0.61	0.43-0.87
Naïve to HPV6								
Yes	0.001	Ref	Ref	-	<0.001	Ref	Ref	-
No		0.48	1.61	1.20-2.16		0.57	1.77	1.32-2.38
Time to blood draw post-last dose (days)	<0.001	-0.004	0.99	0.99-1.00	<0.001	-0.004	0.99	0.99-1.00
Dose spacing category								
Within 7 months	0.40	Ref	Ref	-	0.17	Ref	Ref	-
7 months-1 year		0.16	1.17	0.82-1.67		0.35	1.42	0.97-2.09
1-2 years		-0.25	0.78	0.46-1.33		0.22	1.25	0.71-2.18
HPV11								
Variable	P value	β	Exp β	95% CI	P value	β	Exp β	95% CI
Age (years, in increments of 10)	0.36	-0.05	0.95	0.86-1.06	0.56	-0.04	0.96	0.83-1.11
CD4 count (cells/mm ³)								
<200	0.17	Ref	Ref	-	0.71	Ref	Ref	-
200-500		0.42	1.52	0.77-3.02		0.20	1.22	0.63-2.35
>500		0.58	1.79	0.91-3.52		0.10	1.10	0.56-2.18
CD4 nadir (cells/mm ³ , in increments of 100)	1.00	9.9e-6	1.00	0.94-1.07	0.86	0.007	1.01	0.92-1.10
HIV viral load undetectable (<50 copies/mL)								
Yes	<0.001	Ref	Ref	-	<0.001	Ref	Ref	-
No		-0.75	0.47	0.35-0.62		0.81	0.44	0.32-0.61
Naïve to HPV11								
Yes	0.007	Ref	Ref	-	<0.001	Ref	Ref	-
No		0.47	1.60	1.14-2.25		0.56	1.74	1.25-2.43
Time to blood draw post-last dose (days)	<0.001	-0.005	0.99	0.99-1.00	<0.001	-0.004	0.99	0.99-1.00
Dose spacing category								
Within 7 months	0.52	Ref	Ref	-	0.81	Ref	Ref	-
7 months-1 year		-0.05	0.95	0.67-1.35		0.08	1.08	0.75-1.55

1-2 years		-0.30	0.74	0.44-1.25		0.15	1.16	0.69-1.97
HPV16								
Variable	P value	β	Exp β	95% CI	P value	β	Exp β	95% CI
Age (years, in increments of 10)	0.009	-0.16	0.86	0.76-0.96	<0.001	-0.24	0.78	0.69-0.88
CD4 count (cells/mm ³)	0.05	Ref	Ref	-	0.69	Ref	Ref	-
<200		0.14	1.15	0.53-2.50		-0.1	0.91	0.45-1.85
200-500		0.51	1.67	0.77-3.60		0.04	1.04	0.50-2.15
>500								
CD4 nadir (cells/mm ³ , in increments of 100)	0.56	0.02	1.02	0.95-1.10	0.23	-0.05	0.95	0.88-1.03
HIV viral load undetectable (<50 copies/mL)								
Yes	<0.001	Ref	Ref	-	<0.001	Ref	Ref	-
No		-0.72	0.49	0.35-0.67		-0.66	0.52	0.37-0.71
Naïve to HPV16								
Yes	0.17	Ref	Ref	-	0.02	Ref	Ref	-
No		0.22	1.25	0.91-1.72		0.36	1.44	1.07-1.94
Time to blood draw post-last dose (days)	<0.001	-0.007	0.99	0.99-0.99	<0.001	-0.01	0.99	0.99-0.99
Dose spacing category								
Within 7 months	0.08	Ref	Ref	-	0.95	Ref	Ref	-
7 months-1 year		-0.23	0.80	0.54-1.18		0.05	1.06	0.73-1.53
1-2 years		-0.62	0.54	0.30-0.98		0.06	1.06	0.60-1.87
HPV18								
Variable	P value	β	Exp β	95% CI	P value	β	Exp β	95% CI
Age (years, in increments of 10)	0.07	-0.12	0.89	0.78-1.01	0.02	-0.21	0.81	0.68-0.97
CD4 count (cells/mm ³)	0.03	Ref	Ref	-	0.92	Ref	Ref	-
<200		0.17	1.18	0.50-2.80		-0.002	1.00	0.46-2.17
200-500		0.61	1.84	0.79-4.32		0.07	1.07	0.48-2.39
>500								
CD4 nadir (cells/mm ³ , in increments of 100)	0.99	6.9x10 ⁻⁴	1.00	0.92-1.08	0.75	-0.02	0.98	0.89-1.09
HIV viral load undetectable (<50 copies/mL)								
Yes	<0.001	Ref	Ref	-	<0.001	Ref	Ref	-
No		-1.02	0.36	0.25-0.52		1.03	0.36	0.25-0.52
Naïve to HPV18								
Yes	0.003	Ref	Ref	-	0.007	Ref	Ref	-
No		0.68	1.98	1.27-3.09		0.55	1.74	1.15-2.63
Time to blood draw post-last dose (days)	<0.001	-0.007	0.99	0.99-0.99	<0.001	-0.006	0.99	0.99-1.00
Dose spacing category								
Within 7 months	0.02	Ref	Ref	-	0.51	Ref	Ref	-
7 months-1 year		0.02	1.02	0.66-1.59		0.15	1.16	0.76-1.77
1-2 years		-0.91	0.40	0.21-0.77		-0.24	0.79	0.43-1.46

415 ^a Coefficients from the linear regressions in natural log units of peak HPV antibody titer.
416 ^b Exponentiated coefficients ($e^{\text{coefficient}}$) from the linear regression models. This gives the
417 results in terms of a ratio of geometric mean peak antibody titers on the original scale
418 [$\log(A) - \log(B) = \log(A/B)$], and can be interpreted as percent difference (e.g. 0.80
419 would indicate that the peak antibody titers were 20% lower on average in the category of
420 interest compared to the reference category, while a value of 2 would indicate that the
421 peak antibody titer was 200% (2 times) higher in the category of interest compared to the
422 reference category. A value of 1 indicates no difference between the groups in antibody
423 titers).
424 ^c 95% CI of the exponentiated coefficients.
425