Interactive Ethics

The Ethics Program and STARS invites comments on the ethics dilemma that follows. Students should send their comments by email to mailto:ethics@utsouthwestern.edu. We will post your comments with your initials, school name, and class subject (or anonymously if you prefer). At the end of the comment period, we also will post a perspective from the ethics program.

Case for October-December 2011
(closed for comments)

Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine

HPV, or human papilloma virus, is a family of viruses known to cause genital warts and infections that, in some cases, can lead to cervical cancer later in life. The virus is easily transmitted by intimate physical contact; HPV infection is common among sexually-active individuals (approximately >30%). In the US, about 6 million people, including teens, become infected with HPV each year, and 4,000 women die from cervical cancer.

The US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has approved two vaccines to prevent HPV infection for girls ages 9-26. The national professional association for pediatricians- the American Academy of Pediatrics- recommends that girls receive HPV vaccination around age 11 or 12. That's because this is the age at which the vaccine produces the best immune response in the body, and because it's important to protect girls well before the onset of sexual activity.

Dr. Top, a pediatrician, is uncomfortable with recommending HPV vaccination for teens. Dr. Top believes that providing vaccinations removes a good reason for teens to NOT have premarital sex. A parent of a patient wants to know if she should vaccinate her daughter. What are Dr. Top’s ethical obligations for talking with this parent?

Questions:
• If you were the child, what would you want Dr. Top to tell you?
• If you were the parent, what would you want Dr. Top to tell you?

Student Responses

12-12-11

Dr. Top's obligation to talking to the parent is to tell him/her what the vaccine is, what it prevents, and how it works. Dr. Top shouldn't tell the patient what he thinks because he has to let the parent decide what he wants to do. All of the things that Dr. Top should say to the parent is facts not his opinion regardless if he
thinks that it is wrong to give teens the HPV vaccine. The doctor has to be conscience that not everyone believes that having teens vaccinated could influence on the decision of having pre-marital sex. The doctor shouldn’t give his opinion also because any woman can get cervical cancer at any age and the shot is supposed to prevent it not give teens a reason to be sexually active before marriage. By just giving the parent information and not his opinion it is ethical because he is letting the parent evaluate and make a decision by himself which would be autonomy, which is a good ethical approach to this situation since it is uncomfortable to him.

What I would want the doctor to tell me if I was the child would be how it could help me in the future because if he doesn’t explain how it works and how it could benefit me then I would probably not want it and have problems in the future. I wouldn’t like to be infected and regret not having it all because the doctor didn’t explain to me what it was.

If I were the parent I would also want all the information and not his opinion because as a parent it would probably worry me that it could make my child think in having sexual relationships when she was a teen. As a parent all those comments could opaque the truth about the vaccine and make the decision to not have my daughter have it and probably harming her in the future no matter what her age was. I think cancer is cancer and it is bad as it is and no matter the age and I would not want my child to have cancer just because of being scared if she was going to be sexually active in her teenage years.

S.C.-Ysleta ISD

12-12-11

Autonomy would be an obligation; the doctor should provide the information to the patient and this would also respect the rights of the patient. Non-maleficence would be an obligation; the doctor should seek a way to prevent any harm that could be in the patient’s future and informing her about HPV would prevent harm. Beneficence would be an obligation; the doctor should benefit the patient by telling her about the vaccine. Justice would be an obligation; He should not let the way he feels about the vaccine get in the way of his patient’s health. Fidelity would be an obligation; the doctor has to be competent and realize that the vaccine could prevent her from getting HPV.

If I were the child, I would want the doctor to tell me that the vaccine would be an option. I would want him to tell me the vaccine is for my well-being. If in any case of having premarital sex, I would want to know the vaccine would prevent HPV. As my doctor I would expect him to tell me what is the best for me and not to let his beliefs get in the way of my good health.

If I were a parent, I would of course want the doctor to tell me what can be done to prevent any harm to my child. I would want him to tell me what would be the best for my child medical wise. I would be open to anything that would benefit my child. I would like to know the doctor is seeking the best for my child and that he will not let anything interfere with my child’s well being.

M.G. – Ysleta ISD

12-12-11

Dr. Top, the pediatrician of the little girl, feels uncomfortable after being asked if he (or she) recommends the HPV shot. This pediatrician should be well aware of what his (or her) ethical values should be, as a healthcare provider, he (or she) must present the information or medication that he (or she) is being asked for through a principle-based approach to ethics. Because the pediatrician was asked by the patient’s mother the doctor should take into consideration the patient’s autonomy. As a result of the Dr.’s beliefs and discomfort on the subject of the HPV vaccination he (or she) should also try to perform what he (or she) believes is non-maleficient to the child. In any case the physician must act in a care-based approach where he considers: why the patient’s mother is asking for this shot, is it from prior issues that the family has gone through, is it a preventive measure for future problems based on their way of living? We must consider the
justice for the treatment of the patient; all people have the right to the same and equal treatment
independent of the physician’s feelings.

As the child, I would want to hear something different from the doctor’s point of view. In most cases I would
be insulted by the reaction that the physician has had. I also consider that I would want to hear that I should
receive this vaccine because of the protection it can give in case something were to happen and there was a
case of rape, abuse, harassment, or anything as such I would know that I am protected.

If I were the mother and I were told that the doctor believes that it is wrong to give this vaccine because it is
another reason for premarital sex I would be offended. I would be expecting anything that it can cause to my
child, why would the doctor think about sex? Who would consider a child to want to do this, Dr. Top knows
nothing about our life, our values, our religion, and our way of life. What gives him (or her) the right to state
this? As a mater in fact maybe the mother was asking for the shot because the community where we live in,
what if something happens and the shot could have saved her life.

J.R. – Ysleta ISD
12-12-11

Dr. Top’s ethical obligations for talking with this patient are autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, justice,
privacy, and confidentiality.

If I were the child, I would want Dr. Top to tell me what is the best for me, what ensures my health and
protects me from as much harm as possible. I would definitely want Dr. Top to recommend the HPV vaccine
to feel that my healthcare provider supports my decision to have this vaccine. I would want to feel that
someone has my back, and to receive the right information, at the right time to take the right decision. I
would like as a patient to receive all the facts about the vaccine to judge the pros and cons about receiving it
without feeling judged by others; I would like to feel that I’m free to choose what I feel would benefit me in
the long run.

If I were the parent, I would want Dr. Top to tell me what the facts are relating to the vaccine, what is the
percentage protecting my child, and if he really recommended it. I would love to receive useful information
that would help me decide as a competent adult and responsible of a minor to decide whether my child
would benefit in the future or as in now from the HPV vaccine. I would want to be able to feel responsible
enough to take a decision that in reality wouldn’t affect me, but my child. I have to feel confident and know
that I won’t cause any harm and that although the vaccine may cause pain to my child I know that she is
safe and she’s in good hands that will promote her health, not only in the present but also in her future. I
want to know my decisions are respected above every other thing.

M.S. – Ysleta ISD
12-12-11

Dr. Top has the ethical obligation to tell the parent of the patient about the vaccination for if he/she is not to
tell him or her about the vaccination he/she would be both imposing his own values on the patient and
parent of the patient and also be violating the patient’s value of Autonomy. I would like Dr. Top to tell me
about the vaccine both its benefits and malefactors then as a health care provider allow me to make my own
decision and respect it while not imposing his own values on the explanation of the vaccine to influence my
decision making.

As a parent I would like Dr. Top to tell me why would he/she prescribe the vaccine, if the vaccine would help
my child and leave me to make my decision, for it is my child not his/hers.
I think that Dr. Top should inform the parent the good benefits of giving the shot to the child. The doctor uses an autonomy ethic by giving the patient/parent the choice of deciding, because he respects whatever they choose because it’s their choice. He also uses a care-based approach because he “directs attention to the specific situations within the context of their life narrative”. Giving the child the HPV vaccine will help and protect her later on in the future. It saves the child from getting the virus, but it won’t stop her from getting any other kind of physical contact virus. He’s saving her from cervical cancer that she may get. Not giving the child this vaccine can put her in a greater risk than what she already is.

If I were the child, I would want the doctor to explain to me any way he can, but also to my parent since I would be an underage child. I would want him to tell me it would help keep me from getting sick. I just wouldn’t want to be sick, and avoid it any way possible.

If I were the parent, I would want the doctor to straight out tell me what he thinks is good about giving the vaccine and what he thinks is bad. I know he believes that providing the vaccine is a good reason for teen to not have premarital sex. It really depends on the parent of what their point of view is. I myself think that it is a good idea, because if you don’t take it now, it can be a problem in the future, and you have an even greater chance of getting now than what you did when you were younger. Parents need to think about this, and just because getting the shot now means you’re going to take advantage of it and have sex now. No, you’re still in risk of getting a virus like STDs for example.

Dr. Top’s ethical obligation is to inform the parents and the child about the pros and cons of the vaccination including side effects, statistics, and long-term results. After he finishes informing them, he can always give his point of view on the matter and why he does not approve of the vaccine. From there the parents can choose to either accept or reject the vaccination.

If I was the child in this scenario I would want the doctor to me all the information on the vaccination like he did with the parents, and for him to tell me why he believes I should not take this vaccination. Although I am still a minor and will probably not be able to understand how this vaccination could change my life, it would be comforting to know why my parents decided to allow the doctor to give me the vaccine or not. Even though children do not fully understand the importance of this decision, they should still be informed of what or what is not going to be injected into their bodies and for what reason. After all a human beings body is their own no matter how old the human being may be.

If I was the parent, I would definitely want Dr. Top to give me all the details, information, and statistics about the vaccination. As a parent you only want what you believe is best for your child. I would want the doctor give me his opinion and his views on the matter, but ultimately it is the parent’s choice to decide what will benefit the child. If I was the parent I would expect the doctor to be professional and not be biased on the subject. I would expect and want Dr. Top to give me pamphlets and show me websites where I could learn more about this vaccination.

The ethical obligations Dr. Top faces specifically towards informing the parents about the pros and cons concerning the HPV vaccine are: Autonomy, beneficence, care-based approach, and justice. These ethical obligations apply because, each obligation is meant to help, benefit, or simply inform the patient. Autonomy is meant to provide the information and support the patients and families to make the decision that is right
for them, even if the doctor has to collaborate with other medical advisors. Beneficence applies because this is meant to benefit the patient, by telling the family the pros and cons about the HPV vaccine, they will be able to, as a family, decide what they think is best. Justice is an important factor, because it is meant to insure that all the benefits, risks, and costs of care are justly distributed. Finally I think another important ethical factor Dr. Top should take into consideration is, the care-based approach, by definition this is meant to direct attention to the specific situations of individual patients viewed within their life.

Putting myself in this situation, as the child, I would want to Dr. Top to be completely honest with me, by telling me all the pros, cons, risks, and even some of the flaws with the vaccine. When I was getting my HPV vaccine I thought it was very helpful for my physician to tell me that this can potentially prevent cancer, by hearing this it gave me the security in knowing that I could potentially be saved from something. In considering this I do not believe Dr. Top should tell the parent nor the child, that he believes “that providing vaccinations removes a good reason for teens to NOT have premarital sex.”, while this may be his personal opinion, it runs the risk of giving bias information.

Finally putting myself in the parental position, I believe I would appreciate Dr. Top’s brutally honest opinion. As a parent, most like to hear another person’s point of view, as well as all the risk factors concerning this vaccine. When informing the parent I think is an appropriate time to give his honest opinion, concerning premarital sex. Considering that this is a mother daughter duo, it would more than likely benefit Dr. Top, because the family would fell as if they are able to trust him.

In closing, while Dr. Top must weigh who he tells what, it will surely help to take in the ethical concerns. By making sure he takes into consideration, autonomy, beneficence, justice, and care-based approach, Dr. Top insures not only to please the mother, daughter, and the ethical concerns, he satisfies his conscience by relaying his personal opinion.

A. L. – Ysleta ISD

12-12-11

Dr. Top’s ethical obligations would be to provide the information about the vaccination to the child’s parents regardless of his believes. Since the doctor is able to provide enough information about the vaccine I think his ethical obligations are for him to tell them about the beneficence this vaccine would provide for their child. Dr. Top should provide them with the vaccination’s risks and outcomes are. It wouldn’t be ethical for Dr. Top to provide his beliefs towards the vaccination. Dr. Top would non-maleficence (avoid causing harm) to his patient’s which means he would give the information regardless of his views.

If I was the child, I would want Dr. Top to give me his advice towards the medication and to tell me about his experiences with the vaccination. If the vaccination was being provided to all teenage girls I would want to know what the risk were, and what the outcomes of Dr. Top’s patients had been. Although Dr. Top doesn’t feel comfortable talking about that I would still want to know how he felt towards it. I would want his advice in whether to take this vaccination or not.

If I was the parent, in this scenario, I would like to be informed about the risks the vaccine has. I would want to know not only about the benefits of the vaccine but also about the concerns. I would want to know if my child would be protected enough. I would also like to be provided with percentages of girls who have had the vaccine and what their outcomes have been. I would also like to know about the girls who haven’t had the vaccines.

A.C. – Ysleta ISD

12-12-11
Dr. Top’s ethical obligations as a doctor would be to have the most of ethical sensibility, ethical responsiveness, transformative ethical leadership, and ethical reasoning and discernment. He is faced with a problem that isn’t in his comfort zone, but it’s not quite ethical to think about you. Working with what you believe in, and subsiding the patient’s positive outcome of health, can’t interfere with your work ethics. Since you are confided within the patients trust, your common way of thinking shouldn’t stain the way a patient should be treated. He should do the best of his ability to give the patient all there is to know about the vaccine, and that’s when the patient should decide their course of action, not vice-versa.

If I were in the situation of this circumstance, I wouldn’t want a vaccine period. At twelve you’re still in the thinking of being afraid of shots and afraid of the doctor. Being in this circumstance, I wouldn’t know what HIV would mean, and in all honesty, I still wouldn’t care about what it was; My mind would be set on trying my hardest to avoid being punctured in any way possible—whether it’d be crying, throwing myself on the floor, or running out the room-. Being the child in the situation I would not want the shot, and I would be too fixated on the idea that it is an injection and I wouldn’t understand any of it. Out of anything, I would want to hear the doctor say “you don’t have to have the shot”, “it’s optional,” or “the shot is not right for you,” and hurry out of the room.

Being the parent, in my opinion, is the most crucial part of it. The parents want the best for the child and in the end; they really aren’t into their child’s sex life. Most don’t know when they lose their virginity or how many times they have sex because no matter if the parent is willing to listen about their sex life openly, I’m almost sure the child isn’t willing to tell mom or dad all their past information. Sex life in young people is personal and sacred, something to keep from parents or friends and keep to themselves, being a mother that doesn’t know much—in this scenario—it is crucial to ask about the vaccine and how it works, even if its optional, I would want all the information from “a” to “z” no matter the doctors opinion. In my thinking I would uphold my opinion to be “It’s my daughter, I’m going to protect her as much as I can, because just in case something does happen, I know I did my part as a mother, and not what my doctor thought.”

A.D. – Ysleta ISD

12-12-11

Dr. Top should respect the autonomy (self-determination) principle when talking with this parent. He should provide the information and support that the parent needs to make the decision that is right for them. I think Dr. Top should keep his own opinion about the vaccine out of the conversation, because it’s important to let the patient decide, and they might have a different opinion about the vaccine. Dr. Top should also practice the principle beneficence, which means that even though he does not agree with the vaccine, he must commit himself to actively promote the patient’s benefit, and be sensitive to the fact that the parent may identify benefits and harms differently. The parents of that patient might not be against premarital sex. It’s not important for Dr. Top to express his own opinion on the matter, since he is not the one making the decision, the parent is. Dr. Top should also practice the principle of justice. Just because he’s against the vaccine, does not mean that he should look down on parents who choose to give the vaccine to their children. It is Dr. Top’s responsibility as a healthcare professional is to provide the parent with detailed information on the vaccine so that the parent can come to their own conclusion. Dr. Top should also pay attention to the particulars of individual patients. If the parent does not see premarital sex as a bad thing, the doctor’s opinion will not help her make her decision. It’s important for Dr. Top to understand that everyone has different opinions, so to provide the best quality of care he should keep his opinion out of it.

If I were the child, I would like to be fully informed about the vaccine, both pros and cons, so that I could make the decision on my own and with my parent. I don’t think I would appreciate knowing Dr. Top’s personal opinion because ultimately it’s my decision to make, and I might have a different opinion than him.

If I were the parent, I would also like to know the pros and cons of the vaccine. So that I could come to a decision, on my own, on what’s best for my child. It’s my decision on whether I would want the vaccine for my child or not, and I can come to that conclusion by being fully informed about the vaccine and what it does.
Dr. Top’s ethical obligation is to respect the patient’s right to be informed of the vaccine and to decide whether he or she should receive it. Dr. Top must tell the patient the pros and cons for the vaccine. Not to make the patient hear or make her feel uncomfortable when the doctor tells her it’s not good for you. He must inform and think of what’s best for the patient health wise. He should not enforce his ethical belief to the patient. If the patient asks him for his opinion he should then express his view towards the vaccine. Point is he should have in mind that not everyone thinks the same way, or has the same values.

If I was the child, I would want to know what I can do or take for my health to get better. To have a choice, to either receive the vaccine or not. In the end it would my choice; I have the ethical right to choose the decision that will affect my health in a good or bad way. I would want Dr. Top to tell me the facts on what the vaccine will do to me, both benefits and the flaws. If I was unsure to make my decision, I would ask for the doctor’s honest opinion and hear him out.

If I was the parent, and I was told that I could give my daughter a vaccine that will help prevent cervical cancer and prevent HPV, I would love to know. As a parent it’s important to know what may or may not help my child in his/her life. I would want Dr. Top to inform me about the vaccine, both its pros and cons. I wouldn’t expect him to tell me his ethical view on the matter. To me I believe he must inform me about the shot everything there is to know about it. Now if it is my decision, I would want to hear his view since it might affect my child’s sexual life.

Dr. Top’s ethical obligations while talking to the patient’s parent is to ensure some of the principles of bioethics: autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence. The doctor must use autonomy or self-determination by respecting the rights of patients or their surrogates to make healthcare decisions. By this, patients and families will be provided with information and support onto making the right decision for them. Non-maleficence avoids causing harm when possible. Dr. Top must ensure the beneficence of the teenage girl; what benefits her, and the balance against risks and harms. He must be sensitive to the fact that all individuals involved (parent and daughter) may identify benefits and harms differently. When talking to the parent, Dr. Top should use the care-based approach as necessary in many other cases. This directs attention to the specific situations of individual patients viewed within the context of their life narrative. With this care perspective, Dr. Top will demonstrate characteristics such as the centrality of a caring relationship, promotion of the dignity and respect of patients as people, attention to particulars, cultivation of responsiveness to others and professional responsibility, and last, a redefinition of fundamental moral skills to include virtues.

If I were the child, I would highly appreciate the doctor telling me what is truly best and healthiest for me. Despite the fact of his opinion, I would only be his patient; there is not much of a relationship in between onto him being able to know whether he is removing a good reason from me to why not have premarital sex. I think that maybe he should really talk to me, and give me his opinion and allow me to decide, and let me know the risks and harms of the HIV vaccine. Providing me with information about the situation may be easier for one as the patient to be comfortable with the vaccine or to refuse to receive it. I would also be willing to maybe hear and listen to a bit of lecture and what consequences there are with everything.

If I were the parent, I would want Dr. Top to tell me exactly his personal point of view, what he recommends me as a mother and what the best is for my daughter considering every factor. Not only that, but I would want him to get rid of ethical distress in order to perform his job correctly. I would really appreciate is he would balance the beneficence and the risks and harms onto whether what he should recommend me before he actually does.
Dr. Top’s duties include informing the patient and parent of the HPV vaccine and HPV itself; however, his duties exclude expressing his personal concerns/ideas/opinions on the subject to the patient and parent. As a parent, I would appreciate it if Dr. Top provided me with objective facts not subjective opinions, if it is a proven fact that the HPV vaccine increases sexual promiscuousness, then I would like to be informed of that fact. However, if I do not ask for the doctor’s personal outlook on the subject I do not need to know what it is. Nevertheless, if Dr. Top decided to provide a perspective on the matter, it should be based on facts or at least backed up by facts. As a patient--and also as a parent--I would want Dr. Top to inform me that HPV can cause genital warts and various types of cancer, that everyday 12,000 people ages 15-24 are infected with HPV, that an estimated 8 out of 10 women will become infected with HPV in their lifetime, that everyday 30 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, that many women with cervical cancer were exposed to HPV in their teens and 20’s, that its estimated that each minute in the U.S. there is a new case of genital warts, that 70 percent of cases of cervical cancer arise because of two variants of the virus that the new vaccine protects against, that the HPV vaccine does not protect against 30% of cervical cancer or other STI’s, it only protects against the HPV types that most commonly cause cervical cancer and genital warts, that HPV can cause penile, anal, and oropharyngeal cancer, that you do not need to have sex to get HPV any contact with the genital area can cause it, that the HPV vaccine also protects against anal cancer, that condoms do not fully protect against HVP, I should know all the facts listed above after talking with the doctor, not his personal opinion. Dr. Top could emphasize abstinence subtly by stressing that the HPV vaccine does not protect against other STD’s and 30% of cervical cancer, that condoms do not fully protect against HPV, and that males can’t get screened for HPV so there’s no way to know whether a guy could expose you to the virus. In this case, Dr. Top’s duty as a doctor is to inform the patient and guardian of all the benefits and risks of the HPV vaccine objectively, he has to suppress his personal opinion and do his job.

If I was a child, I would want Dr. Top to inform me on every side effect and benefit from the HPV vaccine. I would also like to learn how it would affect me when I was older, or if there was any major risks I would need to know about.

If I were a parent, I would want Dr. Top to inform me on every information available about the HPV vaccine and if he recommends it. Since he does not recommend it I would like to know how many other adolescents are getting this same vaccine and how many other doctors do recommend this vaccine. I would also like him to tell me that I have a right to a second opinion if I believe his decision is bias. I would also like to know the effects on my child or if this would affect her fertility in any way. Also how would this vaccine be better than without it? And also what exactly is in the vaccine that would prevent the cervical cancer.

Dr. Top’s ethical obligation is to tell you all the information so you can inform yourself and see if the HPV vaccine is a choice you would like to make. A doctor should respect your choice although it is not his life that is at risk but an adolescents, and adolescents are going to make their own decisions about when to be sexually active and it would be better to prevent them from genital warts or cervical cancer now then treat the cervical cancer later in life when there is no hope of them recovering. Because in the end this is your moral right to make this kind of decision for yourself or for the parent to make for their child. No one else has that right to deny you from preventative medicine that could possibly save your life.

Though Dr. Tops may not like the idea that the vaccine may encourage pre-material sex Dr. Tops is not in the position to offer an opinion as it would be imposing his/her own ethics and morals on the family. Dr. Tops may offer information on the virus – like how it is caught and who catches it -and the vaccine, including
the pros and cons, so that the family may make their own educated decision instead of whether not the vaccine will benefit the child.

As a child who may receive the vaccine I would want Dr. Tops to tell me of the advantage that would come if I was vaccinated as in I would have a lower risk of developing cervical cancer due to HPV. I would like to be told that the two predominant cancer causing strains are passed through sexual activity with the majority of partners unaware that they carry the virus and that the vaccine protects against those two strains.

As a parent, I would like to be informed that of the hundred plus strains of HPV thirty of the strains are passed through sexual activity with ten strains related to cancer. It would also be wise to be told that the virus usually presents little symptoms so the majority of carriers are unaware they have the virus. The vaccine protects against the main two cancer causing HPV strains and is deemed safe by the FDA and CDC. I would also like to be informed that the full vaccine is in three doses and is recommended for girls nine through twelve years of age, before they come in contact with the virus through sexual activity.

A.S.
12-9-11

Although he may personally be “uncomfortable” with recommending HPV vaccinations to adolescents due to his religious beliefs against premarital sex, Dr. Top’s ethical obligation as a pediatrician is to provide unbiased answers to any questions the patient or patients’ mother may have pertaining to HPV vaccinations. He is supposed to set aside his personal feelings on the matter and help in any way with what the clients want.

If I were the child in this case I would want to know all the side effects which taking this shot may lead to: fever; nausea; diarrhea; fatigue; and what the vaccination can prevents such as: genital warts and infections; cervical cancer; even death. Given the pros and cons to taking the vaccination I’d be able to make a reasonable decision that way I’m safe should I decide to have premarital sex or even if my husband is an unknowing carrier of the human papilloma virus.

If I was the mother in this scenario I would want to take any preventative measures against the human papilloma virus. I’d want my daughter to be safe no matter what her future decisions may include. But I’d like to hear about the side effects from the vaccination and also what my daughter would gain from this. I would want to know if the vaccination really works and if it could trigger any of her allergies. However, I wouldn’t want his personal opinion because I don’t know if he has any children, what religion he practices, and quite frankly I wouldn’t care. It is my daughter and I’d want her to be protected against genital warts and infections that can lead to cervical cancer and sometimes even death.

K.R.
12-9-11

Being the child, I would want Dr. Top to have no problem giving me the vaccine. I would also like him to let me know everything will be fine. I would like to be able to feel comfortable with the idea of getting this vaccine, be able to be happy with decision, and most importantly come out alive, and not one of the many people that develop HPV which later results into cervical cancer, and eventually leading to my death. All this information may be false, but as a child this is what I would want to hear. In the parent’s eyes, I would want to be able to hear all the facts about getting this vaccine, the side effects, the benefits, and anything else that has to do with the patient, and that this is the best thing for my child, and I was doing the right thing for her by coming to get this vaccine. If that wasn’t the case I would want to hear about all the facts even if they were about bad results, due to the vaccine. In Dr. Top’s position, I would have to tell the patient and the patient’s parent. The patient and patient’s mother should know the benefits and downfalls towards getting the vaccine. Even though Dr. Top may have different feelings towards the patient’s choice, he still has to respect and acknowledge their choice. Whatever it may be, he is obliged to do what the patient feels they
need or want. Regardless, if Dr. Top feels like it’s the wrong thing to do, he still has to give the vaccine if that is really what the patient desires.

V.L.
12-9-11

If I were a child, I would want Dr. Top to tell me everything there is to know about the HPV virus including the negative attributes, without any of the doctor’s opinions. Although I would be only 11 or 12, I would be immune to the virus, in which in the long run, should help me later in life if I were to be perform premarital sex. I would also like for the doctor to tell me how could I benefit from this vaccine and if it would be better for me to get it now or later on in my life. If I were to be the parent, I would want Dr. Top to tell me absolutely everything there is about the HPV virus including any side effects and if the vaccine has actually been tested to prevent the HPV virus. I also wouldn’t like the doctor to give me his opinions because not only may I think differently, I don’t want him to be scaring my child with his uncertainty of what is morally right or wrong pertaining to premarital sex. Dr. Top’s ethical obligation is to tell the parent everything that deals with the HPV vaccination. Dr. Top must also give ONLY facts about the concern and not his personal opinions because one of his views might upset not only the child, but can upset the parent. The doctor has no right to be the one to choose if the child should have premarital sex. Who knows? Even parents could believe in premarital sex.

C.L.
12-9-11

Doctors should be bound by their medical opinion only; their personal beliefs are a whole different ball game that unless asked for- should be kept to themselves. In this situation, Dr. Top has an obligation to give both the pros and cons of such a vaccine, even if Dr. Top is biased in its administration. It would be unethical if Dr. Top knew that the vaccine was effective, but delivered a different response because “it was against her beliefs to give such a thing”. Whether the patient or patient’s parent decides if the vaccine is “the right choice”, it is entirely up to them. What most doctors don’t realize is that patients are usually vulnerable to being easily influenced since they don’t have the slightest idea as to what to do medically. This vulnerability should not be taken advantage of by people with so much power over the situation- doctors in this case. If I was the child, I would want Dr. Top to let me know that the vaccine will benefit my body more rather than harm it. Children are often scared of being “hurt”; that is their primary concern. If the doctor seemed unsure about the vaccine, I- as a child - would pick up on that and become afraid. If I was the parent, I would be interested solely in the well-being of my child, not what the doctor thinks is morally correct. I would want Dr. Top to give me every tidbit of scientific information that could help me decide if the vaccine was worth it. As a parent, I would know my child’s propensity to violate abstinence, and could make an ethical decision as to what to do once my medical questions have been answered; I wouldn’t need Dr. Top influencing me with his beliefs.

C. P.
12-9-11

Dr. Top’s ethical obligation is to inform both the parent and the daughter about the vaccine. He should tell them about the HPV virus, what it causes, and how it is transmitted. He should also tell them about the vaccine and that its purpose is to protect girls against the HPV virus before the onset of sexual activity. He shouldn’t mention his belief that providing vaccinations removes a good reason for teens to not have premarital sex because he would be influencing the decision of the parent and the daughter. After the doctor provides them with information about the virus, the parent and daughter should make the decisions for themselves. If I were the parent, I would want Dr. Top to give me information about the vaccine and I probably would want him to tell me if I should give my daughter the vaccine even though he shouldn’t express his opinion because I am indecisive. At the same time, I wouldn’t want to give my daughter the vaccine because I think she shouldn’t be sexually active. If I were the child, I would want the doctor to tell
me everything he knows about the virus, its consequences, what would happen if I didn’t take the vaccine, or if I did take the vaccine. After he taught me about the virus and vaccine, I would then decide to take the vaccine since I am going to be the one taking the vaccine.

K.C.
12-9-11

I believe Dr. Top's ethical obligations, as a doctor, is to inform the parent about all of the effects of the HPV vaccine. Even though he is uncomfortable with recommending the HPV vaccine for teens, it’s still his duty to at least inform the parent about all of the facts referring to the vaccine—including the history about the number of deaths caused by cervical cancer—and his personal opinion should be left out. The more knowledge that’s gained will give more confidence to the parent about deciding whether or not she should have her daughter vaccinated. If I were the child in this particular situation, I would want Dr. Top to tell me what exactly the vaccine is for—to prevent the HPV infection, which in turn prevents cervical cancer. If I were the parent wondering if my own daughter should get vaccinated, I would want Dr. Top to inform me about all of the history referring to the vaccine, as I previously stated. I would like to know of the facts—like the 6 million people who become infected with the HPV infection every year, which includes teens, and about the 4,000 women that end up dying from cervical cancer.

A.G. - Bel Air High School
12-8-11

Dr. Top has the ethical obligation to inform the parent of all potential benefits of the vaccine as well as the symptoms, side effects, and any other potentially harmful uses of the vaccine. Dr. Top should give the parent all the facts, and remember to leave his personal opinion about the vaccine out of the conversation. As a child I would want the doctor to explain the reasoning of having the vaccine. The importance of what the vaccine would prevent, but also include the facts that the vaccine would not protect us from all other diseases that can be cause from sexual activity. That although the vaccine maybe a preventive measure for HPV the vaccine doesn’t not ensure complete safety from the disease. As a parent I would like to be informed the reasoning of the vaccine and the preventive measure that is being taken just by administrating the vaccine. The possibility that my son/daughter wouldn’t have to become part of the percentage of people, greater than 30 percent, that acquire HPV, and the possibility that I could have just decreased the chance of my child, most likely daughter, from not obtaining cervical cancer.

V. T.
12-7-11

I believe that Dr. Top should tell both the child and the parents about the benefits and possible dangers of getting this vaccine but should also stress the fact that it only protects against HPV. Dr. Top should reiterate that other dangers of having premarital sex still exist and that the vaccine will not protect against other STDs and pregnancy. However, it is not Dr. Top's place to advice patients on the morality of the issue; that decision should be left up to the parents and the child. Other people may not feel the same moral constraints as Dr. Top, and in such a case it is best to provide them with the best medical protection available. If an adolescent really wants to have sex, they will. In addition, it's not as if HPV is the only thing that would prevent a person from having sex. There are plenty of other STDs and pregnancy to worry about. There are also those who oppose premarital sex on moral grounds just like Dr. Top.

Regardless of what the situation is, the vaccine should be offered as an option for the protection of the child’s health in the future. I think the possibility of preventing a person’s death outweighs the possibility of engendering them to engage in premarital sex. Dr. Top should just offer the vaccine, present the facts, and let the family decide on the ethics behind it.
D. T.
11-23-11

In this case, vaccinating the child would be the right thing to do regardless of what the doctor thinks. If I was the child, I would want Dr. Top to, before vaccinating me, talk to me about the dangers of the Human Papilloma Virus, such as the fact that it is known to cause genital warts and, in some cases, cause infections that lead to cervical cancer. Also, explain to me that engaging in premarital sex increases my chances of getting this virus by a lot. After teaching me about the virus, he should tell me to make sure to remember everything he said and I shouldn't contract the virus. If I were the patient's parents, I would want Dr. Top to speak with my wife and in another room and tell us everything he explained to our child in broader detail and tell us to make sure that our child should be safe as long as he/she does not engage in sexual intercourse until he/she is married. Afterwards, obviously, my wife and I would agree for Dr. Top to administer the vaccine and lead my child into a better future. That, in my opinion, would be the right thing to do in Dr. Top's position.

C.D. - Plano West Senior High School

11-22-11

I would expect for Dr. Top to tell me what are the pros and cons about having this vaccine but Dr. Top can also give his feelings about the vaccine because many parents and children look at their doctor for their opinion on stuff in the medical field. I would want Dr. Top to give me the vaccine if I was the child because it is better to be vaccinated for the virus and not receive the virus other than receiving the virus because I was not vaccinated for HPV. If I was the parent I would want my child to be vaccinated because it is always better to be safe than sorry and I would want my child to be vaccinated for as many viruses as possible and would not want them to be sick from anything by protecting them with as many vaccines as possible. I think that the parents also have the responsibility of teaching their child the correct morals of not having pre-marital sex but it is also important to have the child protected from sexual diseases even if it may promote pre-marital sex within the teen.

P.P. – Plano West Senior High School

11-22-11

As a child, I would want the doctor to tell me everything about the vaccine and virus, even why he doesn’t agree with it. As a parent, I would want the doctor to make sure that I have the same information that my child received as well with the possible side effects. Personally, I do not think that HPV vaccine should be given because I am strongly against premarital sex and anything that may encourage it.

F.S. – Plano West Senior High School

11-22-11

I don’t think that Dr. Top's opinion of the vaccine in relation to premarital sex should have any bearing on the administration of the drug. Prevention of premarital sex is not the responsibility of the physician, but rather the decision made by the teenager. The teenager makes the choice to have sex largely due to the way they were raised by their parents. I know plenty of adults who would be fine if their kids had sex, as long as safe sex is practiced. The primary reason teenagers don’t have sex is out of fear of pregnancy. Not sexually transmitted diseases. If a vaccine can help prevent the spread the HPV and cervical cancer, premarital sex is the last thing parents need to worry about.

D.S. – Plano West Senior High School

11-22-11
As the parent of the child, I would expect the doctor to give me facts and numbers rather than his opinion. I feel that the doctors know their options and must provide the parent with the proper information in order for them to make the right choice. As a parent, I would not promote sexual behavior in my child's life, I would stand against it, but one cannot escape the fact that over 6 million people are infected yearly with the HPV strains and that a very shocking number of 4 thousand people die of cervical cancer. I believe that my child's health comes before anything, and that it is just not worth the risk one takes by not getting vaccinated. I would appreciate the Dr. Top to share his views on the pros and cons of the vaccine in order to help the parent and patient understand the outcome. However, the ultimate decision should be held for the parent of the patient to decide.

E.K. – Plano West Senior High School

I believe that getting the HPV vaccine is a great way to reduce the risk of the HPV and cervical cancer in the future. As a child, I would want my parents to do what is best for me. My parents got me vaccinated when I was 12. I didn't think just because I had the vaccination that premarital sex was okay. If 6 million people a year are getting infected with HPV I would definitely want to lower my risk by getting the vaccine. I'm really glad I got the vaccine. I would expect Dr. Top to tell me the facts and I would make the decision with my parents for myself. If I was the parent I would talk with the doctor and decide what is best for my daughter. I would most likely get her protected because you never know what is going to happen and it's better to be safe than sorry.

A.A. - Plano West Senior High School

As the child, I would expect Dr. Top to give me any information necessary about the vaccine as to what it does, its effects, pros and cons, etc. As a patient, I feel that I am obligated to know what goes in my body. I hold the same opinion in the situation of the parent. Dr. Top is obligated to tell me everything he knows about the vaccine and what it can do to me, without any bias or speculation. After he explains the efficiency of the vaccine, possible side effects and more, I would feel more comfortable with Dr. Top reflecting his personal opinion as long as he does so without trying to change my own personal beliefs on the matter.

M.T. – Plano West Senior High School

I do agree with Dr. Top's opinion that the availability of vaccinations provides an excuse for teenagers to engage in sexual activities at an early age, before marriage. Dr. Top should inform the parent of the vaccine's purpose in protecting against HPV, as well as some background information of the virus itself. He should also explain how HPV transmission can be accompanied by a possible future diagnosis with cervical cancer. As a parent of my teenage daughter, I would be very convinced after receiving these facts that the vaccine is quite necessary since it offers a substantial barrier to the transmission of HPV. While Dr. Top's opinion may be true, I don't see the harm in recommending the vaccination because it's always good to be safe, whether the teenage daughter is sexually active or not.

J.L. – Plano West Senior High School

Dr. Top's ethical obligations would be to provide the patient's parent with any information or facts about HPV that the parent would like to know. Then, Dr. Top should explain to the patient's parent the positive and negative effects of receiving the HPV vaccination. At this point, Dr. Top would have fulfilled his ethical obligations by giving the patient's parent enough information so that they would be able to choose themselves whether or not they would want their child vaccinated. If Dr. Top had tried to influence the
patient’s parent or the patient towards his own viewpoint, then he would not have been fulfilling his ethical obligations. He would have been trying to make the decision for the patient himself, rather than allowing the patient and their parent to decide for themselves. In any situation, Dr. Top should always tell parents about the positives and negatives of the HPV vaccine, and Dr. Top should also always explain why the vaccine can be considered beneficial to a patient’s health.

J.H.

11-21-11

If I were the child, I would want Dr. Top to tell me everything about the vaccination. This includes all pros and cons, possible side effects, and risks. I would also like to know why I would possibly need the vaccination and what it is important for. I would like the doctor to tell me what would happen if I did not receive the vaccination and engaged in premarital sex. That way, I am aware of the consequences. I would definitely like to hear what the doctor thinks of the vaccination but I would not let it influence my decision.

If I were the parent, I would want Dr. Top to tell me all the above, plus the chances of actually getting the HPV virus. I would also like to know how successful the vaccination is, the background of the virus, how it is spread, etc. I believe that the doctor’s opinion of the vaccination should be expressed only when asked. Ultimately, the decision is between the child and the parent. I feel that any good parent would understand the consequences and make a decision based on what they believe is right for their child, based on personal beliefs and mannerisms of the child.

S.G. – Plano West Senior High School

11-21-11

In this day and age many teens are doing things that would not be considered acceptable by many, other teens and parents alike. And many teens are sexually-active individuals. And by giving this vaccine they are protecting that specific individual and everyone they interact with. So it is the doctor’s ethical obligation to suggest that they take the shot for their own protection. On the flip side if I was a child I would want my doctor to tell me because I want to be informed about what is out there. So that I would make decisions and I would know their repercussions. If I was an adult I would want my child to know about HPV and by giving the child the vaccine the doctor would be doing the ethical thing. By telling them about what this is and what it can cause in the future the doctor and the parent would be helping the teen by reducing their chances of having HPV, cervical cancer and commit sexual activities.

R.S. - Plano West Senior High School

11-21-11

I would expect the doctor to give me the vaccine, because the doctor is worrying about the girls not having sex so that they won’t get this. I would be more worried about getting cervical cancer than not getting the vaccine because the doctor doesn’t want me having sex. I wouldn’t want to be part of the 6 million people a year that have this infection. If I was the parent I would definitely want the doctor to give the vaccine to my child, because it’s better to be safe than sorry. For me as a parent I would rather have my child protected rather than having my child have cervical cancer and seeing them suffer.

J.S. - Plano West Senior High School

11-21-11

I think Dr. Top is ethically required to inform the parent of all of the factual information about the HP vaccine. Although Dr. Top does not personally like what the vaccine stands for on a social level, medically the vaccine stands to reduce the number of people infected with HPV and decrease the number of women dying from cervical cancer. Overall, it seems that Dr. Top’s moral and ethical views are in opposition. Unless the
mother of the patient asks what Dr. Top’s personal perspective on the vaccine is, only the facts need to be told to the mother – Dr. Top is a professional and should act accordingly.

If I were the child, I would want Dr. Top to tell me what the vaccine was for. There are so many diseases out there that children can catch and I would be relieved knowing the possibility of catching one more virus was eliminated. If I were a parent, I would want only the facts from Dr. Top. It would be preferable to me that I could make the decision based on my morals without Dr. Top’s personal opinion. In general, if I were a parent I would hope that my child’s doctor was giving me all the pertinent information without including any unnecessary bias.

Z.Q. – Plano West Senior High School

If I were the parent I would want Dr. Top to tell me everything he knows about the HPV Vaccine. I would rather have him inform me about the circumstance so that I could inform my child and not have him worry about it. Dr. Top should not let his beliefs get in the way of doing his professional job. I would want to know about the 6 million people HPV affects each year and that it can cause cervical cancer. The patient is entitled to be informed about any circumstance he is in, so while Dr. Top may be going against his beliefs by giving the HPV vaccine to a child he must do so. Also, by giving the vaccine it would help me as a parent explain to my child the importance of protecting her body, about the dangers of STD’s, and about being responsible starting at a younger age.

A.J. - Plano West Senior High School

If I was a child, I would rather be more prepared now then later in the future. At the age of 12 I am still in middle school, but when it comes to being in high school and relationships are more prone to happen and so is sex. Getting the shot is just like having a condom; just because you have one does not mean you should have sex. I would want a doctor to be straight forward with me and do his professional job, not give his opinion. While on a parents point of view I would want to prepare my daughter on all levels, and at the age of 26 she would probably already be having sex by that time. It is not about what you WISH would happen it is about what IS going to happen. I would want the doctor to tell me the real benefits and positives for getting the shot.

B.P.

If I was a child, I would rather be more prepared now then later in the future. At the age of 12 I am still in middle school, but when it comes to being in high school and relationships are more prone to happen and so is sex. Getting the shot is just like having a condom; just because you have one does not mean you should have sex. I would want a doctor to be straight forward with me and do his professional job, not give his opinion. While on a parents point of view I would want to prepare my daughter on all levels, and at the age of 26 she would probably already be having sex by that time. It is not about what you WISH would happen it is about what IS going to happen. I would want the doctor to tell me the real benefits and positives for getting the shot.

A.E. - Plano West Senior High School

Okay let’s look at this situation in the most logical way possible. For one thing Dr. Top is required to explain the nonopinionated pros and cons of the vaccine to the parent of the child regardless of his own views on the subject. Now, when looking to the hypothetical future a parent should ask what are all of the possible, good and bad, outcomes when it comes to my child. Yes, I know this would be hard to do then but really it
would be a good thing to consider. By receiving the vaccine now, the child would most likely be protected against at least one form of cervical cancer that she could possibly receive in the future. Considering the ugly truth that in U.S. in 2010 there were a total of 85,000 recorded forcible rapes (note: this does not include those never recorded, which could in fact be thousands more) and that the percentages of recurring teen pregnancies are steadily rising. As a parent I would want my daughter to be as protected as possible against whatever can happen in both the near and distant future.

On the topic of premarital sex, today about 95% of Americans have premarital sex by the age of 44 and that percentage is still yet rising. It is almost impossible for a parent to prevent their children from having sex once they grow up and move out, so not protecting the child from cancer as a way to discourage premarital sex is pretty much useless. Dr. Top's opinions on this case only matter if the parent asks for them so he should tell the parent all of the pros and cons of the vaccine and then remove himself from the decision as it is not his to make no matter what his opinions are.

E.F. – Plano West Senior High School