Abstract

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually-transmitted infection (STI). Approximately 20 million Americans between the ages of 15 and 49 years currently have HPV with > 6.2 million new HPV infections estimated to occur each year. Yet, HPV vaccination rates remain relatively low. More than 40 strains of HPV are transmitted through genital contact during vaginal, anal, or oral sex and can infect males and females. In addition to causing genital warts, HPV is associated with cervical, vulvar, vaginal, anus, penile, and oropharyngeal cancers. In women, the most prominent type of cancer is cervical with > 12,000 diagnoses each year and 4,000 expected to die. In Mississippi, a total of 1,829 HPV-associated cancers were diagnosed between 2004 and 2008, with an average of 33,369 cases in the United States (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2012a). In 2000, the estimated cost of management of HPV for individuals between the age of 15 and 24 years totaled $2.9 billion. The aim of this study was to increase vaccination rates using social marketing strategies. The study was guided by an integrative approach using education sessions and pretest/posttest design to evaluate knowledge of HPV. Research data were obtained from 25 participants between the ages of 18 and 20 years. According to the CDC (2012c), males and females between the ages of 9 and 26 years should be offered the Gardasil® vaccine to achieve disease prevention. Research findings revealed increasing knowledge about HPV caused an increase in the number of students that received the vaccine after the intervention.