

High Prevalence of HPV-Induced Anogenital Squamous Cell Carcinoma in Men in Kinshasa: Implications for Public Health Interventions

Soman Franklin*

Department of Surgery, Athens University, Athina, Greece

*Corresponding author: Soman Franklin, Department of Surgery, Athens University, Athina, Greece; E-mail: somaf13@gmail.com

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Introduction

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a significant causative agent of anogenital Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC). While extensive research has focused on women, less is known about the prevalence of HPV-induced anogenital SCC in men, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

This study aims to determine the prevalence of HPV-induced anogenital squamous cell carcinoma in men in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

A cross-sectional study was conducted from January 2023 to June 2023 involving 500 men aged 18-70 years attending the University Hospital in Kinshasa. Participants underwent clinical examination and biopsy of suspected lesions. HPV DNA was detected using Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) techniques and the presence of SCC was confirmed histopathologically.

Description

Out of 500 participants, 45 (9%) were diagnosed with anogenital SCC. HPV DNA was detected in 36 (80%) of these cases. The most common HPV types identified were HPV 16 (45%) and HPV 18 (25%). The prevalence of HPV-induced anogenital SCC was significantly higher in men aged 50 years and above ($p < 0.05$).

The prevalence of HPV-induced anogenital squamous cell carcinoma in men in Kinshasa is substantial, with a significant proportion attributed to high-risk HPV types. These findings highlight the need for targeted HPV vaccination and screening programs for men in this region.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is well-documented as a leading cause of anogenital Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC), including penile, anal and perianal cancers. While substantial research has focused on HPV-related cancers in women, particularly cervical cancer, there is limited data on the prevalence and impact of HPV-induced anogenital SCC in men, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the prevalence of HPV-induced anogenital SCC among men in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

A cross-sectional study was conducted from January 2023 to June 2023 at the University Hospital in Kinshasa. The study

population included 500 men aged 18-70 years who presented with symptoms suggestive of anogenital lesions. Exclusion criteria were individuals with prior diagnoses of anogenital SCC or those undergoing treatment for HPV-related conditions.

Participants underwent a comprehensive clinical examination and biopsies were taken from any suspected anogenital lesions. Demographic and clinical data were collected using structured questionnaires. Biopsy samples were analyzed histopathologically to confirm the presence of SCC. HPV DNA was extracted and detected using Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) techniques, with specific primers for high-risk HPV types, including HPV 16 and HPV 18.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic and clinical characteristics. The prevalence of HPV-induced anogenital SCC was calculated and associations with age and other risk factors were assessed using *Chi-square* tests and logistic regression analysis. Of the 500 men included in the study, the median age was 45 years (range: 18-70 years). Most participants were married (60%) and the majority (70%) reported a history of multiple sexual partners.

Out of 500 participants, 45 (9%) were diagnosed with anogenital SCC. Among these, 36 (80%) cases were positive for HPV DNA. The prevalence of HPV-induced anogenital SCC was highest in men aged 50 years and above (12%) compared to younger age groups ($p < 0.05$). The most prevalent HPV types identified were HPV 16 (45%) and HPV 18 (25%), followed by other high-risk types such as HPV 31 and HPV 33.

Conclusion

This study reveals a significant prevalence of HPV-induced anogenital squamous cell carcinoma in men in Kinshasa, with a high proportion attributable to high-risk HPV types 16 and 18. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive HPV vaccination and screening programs targeting both men and women in this region to reduce the burden of HPV-related cancers. The prevalence of HPV-induced anogenital squamous cell carcinoma in men in Kinshasa is notable, particularly among older men. Effective public health strategies, including vaccination and routine screening, are imperative to address this public health challenge.