

Knowledge of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Among Private Office and Community-based Clinic Populations: An Assessment of What the Public Understands About HPV

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Knowledge of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Among Private Office and Community-based Clinic Populations: An Assessment of What the Public Understands About HPV

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Objective

The goal of this study was to assess the knowledge of women (aged 15–25 years) about human papillomavirus (HPV), its risk factors and its causes.

Background

HPV is a sexually transmitted disease that has been linked to abnormal pap smears, genital warts and invasive cervical and anal cancers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the estimated annual incidence of HPV in the US is 5.5 million.

The National Cancer Institute 2005 Health Information Survey suggested that women only become aware of HPV and its consequences after they have had an abnormal pap smear. **Only 40% of females 15-25 knew about HPV and of those, only 20% understood that HPV can cause cervical cancer.**

Prevention of HPV's long term effects is possible through early detection, treatment and education.

Methods

An anonymous 21-item questionnaire was distributed to women at two private offices and one community-based clinic in urban Pennsylvania. It was available in English and Spanish. Data were collected about demographics, social history, sexual history and knowledge (recognition, risk factors, causes, prevention). Basic descriptive statistics and frequency calculations were performed using χ^2 analysis. The remainder of the data were analyzed using the t test.

Patient Education

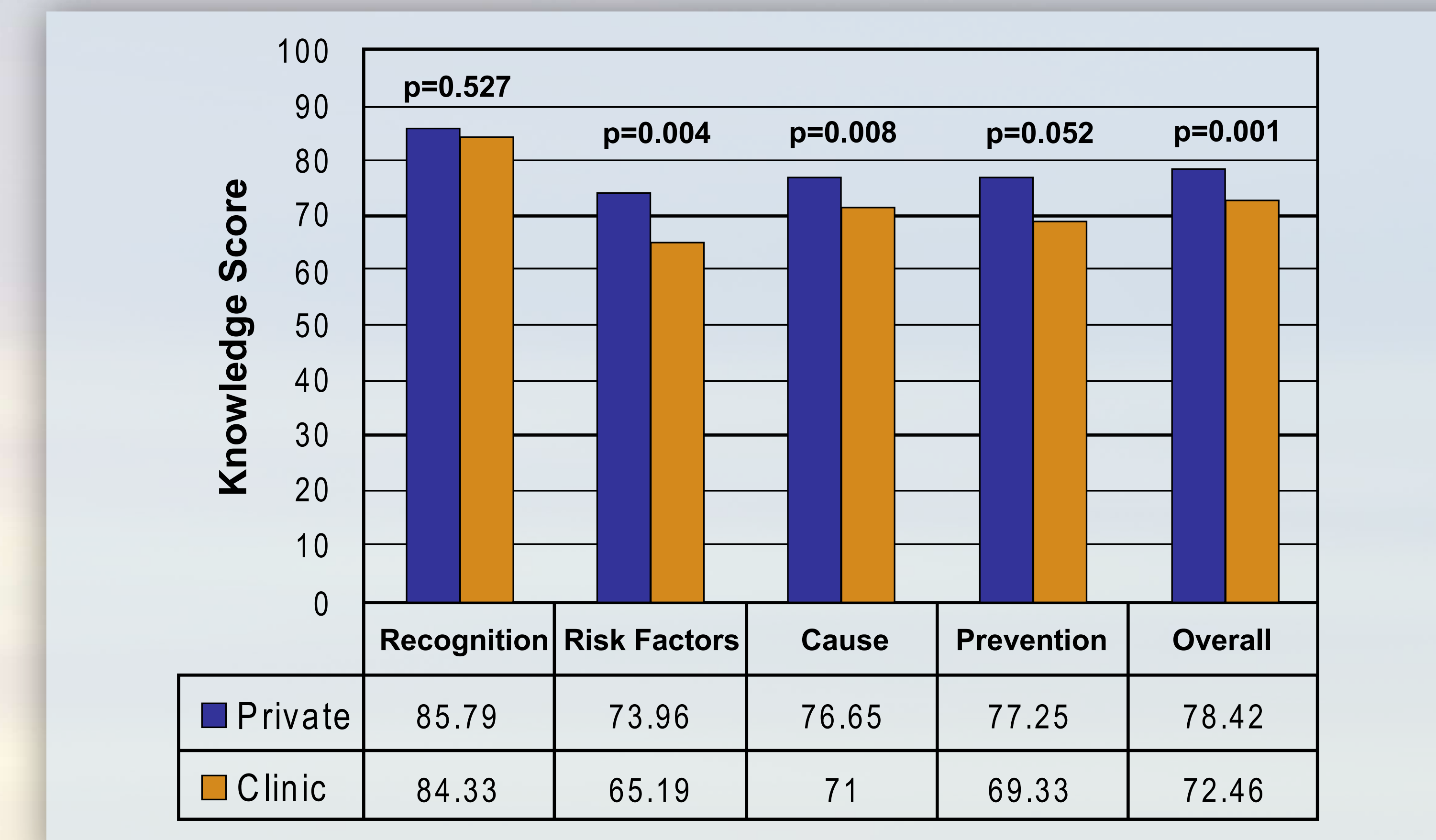
Respondents received a copy of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Patient Education pamphlet on Human Papillomavirus Infection.

Results

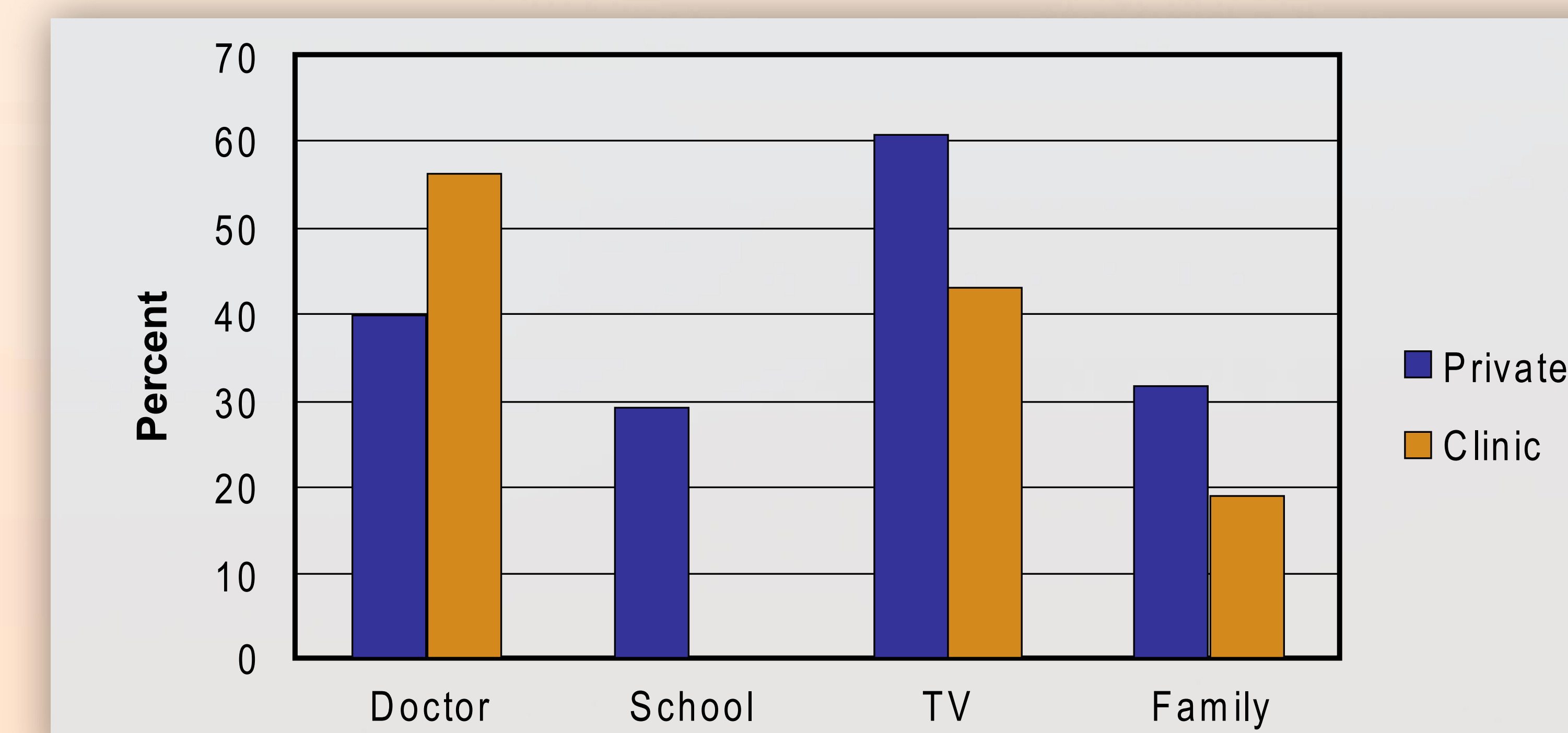
Demographics (293 respondents)

		Private	Clinic	p-value
Age	12-17 yrs	46	3	0.012
	18-25 yrs	174	16	
	25-40 yrs	36	8	
	>40 yrs	5	3	
Race	Black	1	2	<0.001
	Hsipanic	16	14	
	White	233	11	
	Asian	6	0	
Education	Elementary	0	1	<0.001
	Middle	2	0	
	High School	87	20	
	College	172	9	
Smoking		47	2	0.128
Sexually Active		176	27	0.008
H/O STD		30	9	0.007
Last Pap Smear	never	62	0	0.034
	1 year	178	25	
	5 years	6	1	
	>10 years	1	0	
H/O Abn Pap		61	12	0.096
# Partners	none	38	0	0.074
	1 to 2	88	13	
	3 or more	126	16	
Vaccine	Know about	211	11	<0.001
	Offered	103	0	<0.001
	Received	38	1	<0.001

Private vs. Clinic Patient Knowledge



Source of HPV Information



Knowledge – how many people know basic facts

- HPV is a sexually transmitted disease – 60.8%
- Multiple sexual partners increase the risk of HPV – 76.5%
- Smoking is a risk factor – 24.9%
- HPV causes cervical cancer – 88.1%
- Abstinence (67.6%), HPV vaccine (72%) and condom use (48.5%) prevent HPV

Private Office vs. Community-based Clinic

Only 55.2% of respondents from the community-based clinic had heard of HPV versus 93.2% from private offices.

Overall mean knowledge scores were statistically different (78.42 vs 72.46, P = 0.001). There were statistically significant differences in knowledge of **risk factors** (73.96 vs 65.19, P = 0.004) and **causes** (76.65 vs 71.00, P = 0.008).

Patients from the community-based clinic were more likely to have **heard about HPV from a doctor** (56.3%) than from other sources (school, 0%; TV, 43.3%; family, 18.8%).

Conclusions

Significant differences in knowledge exist between private office and community-based clinic populations; namely, risk factors and causes of HPV.

Doctors play an important educational role in the community-based clinic, and this must be used to increase awareness and knowledge.

The **link between smoking and HPV** must be emphasized to all women.