

Relevant new data on human papillomavirus infections

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Human papillomavirus (HPV) infections belong to the most frequent viral infections worldwide. So far, more than 200 different HPV-types have been completely classified. HPV infect multilayered squamous epithelia of the skin and mucous membranes. Phylogenetically, they can be divided into five genera called alpha, beta, gamma, mu and nu. Wart-inducing HPV can be found in all genera besides beta. Cutaneous warts are very common and affect most people at some time during their childhood/adolescence or later. Approximately 40 mucosal HPV-types of the genus alpha predominantly occur in the anogenital region. These HPV types can be further sub-classified into high-risk (e.g., HPV16 and HPV18) and low-risk (e.g., HPV6 and HPV11) types, depending on their oncogenic potential. This lecture provides an overview on current new data concerning cutaneous warts (spread of HPV within families and effective strategies to prevent infection), anogenital dysplasia (recent data on prevention of anal cancer with screening and treatment of anal precursor lesions), and prophylactic HPV vaccination (effectiveness of singly dose HPV vaccination).