

# Knowledge and Attitudes about Vaccines & HPV in the United States

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## Background:

- Public health professionals around the world agree that vaccines remain one of “the most effective and successful public health tools to prevent disease, illness, and premature death from preventable infectious disease” (Assessing the State of Vaccine Confidence).
- Human papillomavirus (HPV) is one example of a disease is preventable with a vaccine and that, if left unchecked, can lead to serious outcomes including cervical cancer (HPV Infection).
- The risks of HPV related illnesses can be drastically minimized by getting the HPV vaccine when considered eligible (Berven, 2023).

## The Gaps in Research:

1. Interventions to increase HPV vaccination uptake have focused on parents and children and adolescents, but there is an existing gap specifically amongst college-aged women.
2. There is a need to better identify communities with low and/or waning vaccine confidence and to address those communities with targeted approaches.
3. There is limited literature available that specifically examines barriers faced by college-aged women to receiving the HPV vaccine.

## Methods:

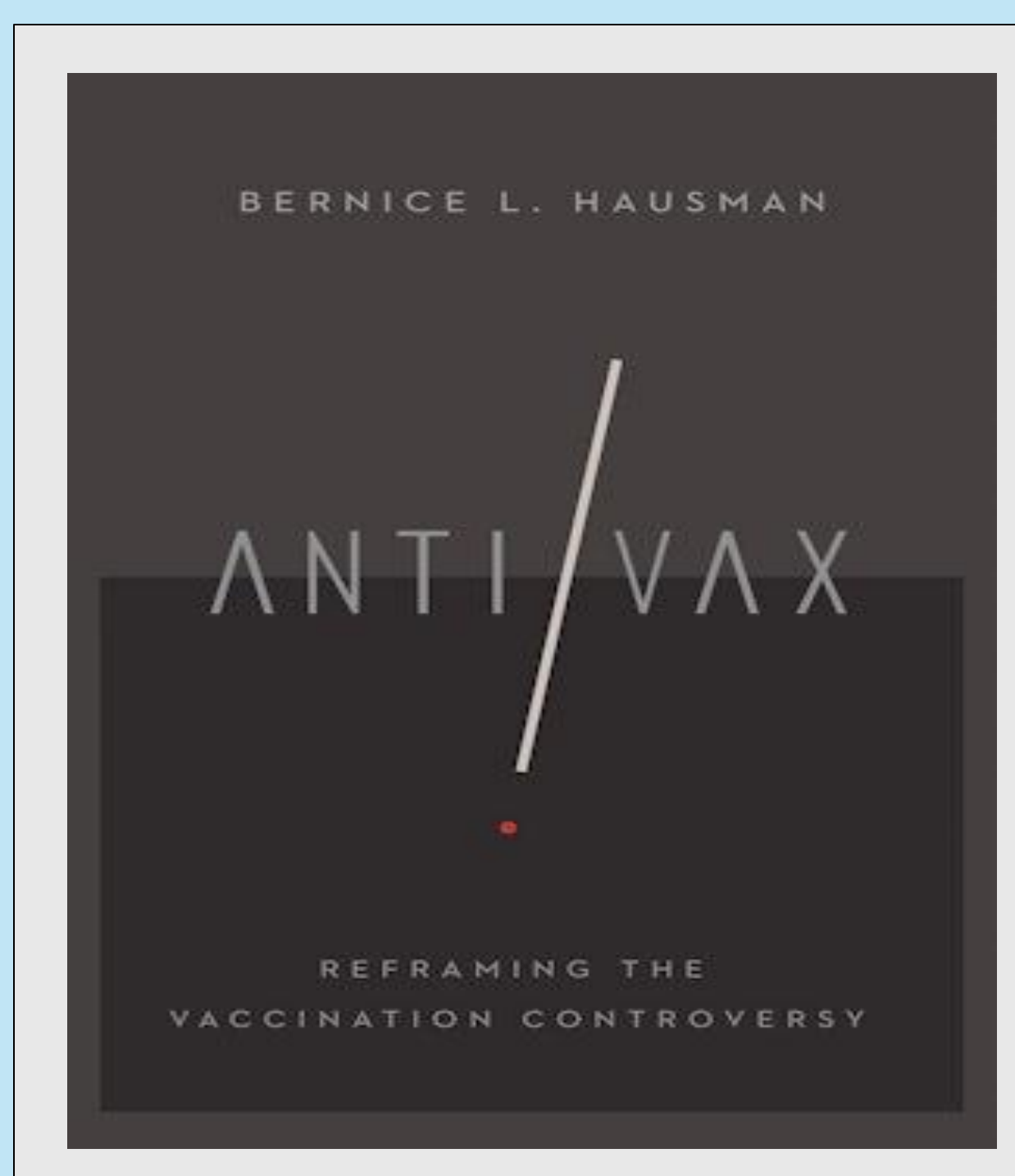
- A literature review was conducted on the historical past involving vaccine attitudes.
- Databases such as PubMed, Cochrane Library and Scopus were used to gather existing research on the topic.
- Key phrases that were used were "HPV vaccine hesitancy", "college-aged women" and "vaccine attitudes."
- Data was organized and collected based on a more general background, and then the research was narrowed down to the specific topic of HPV vaccine attitudes among undergraduate students.

## Abstract:

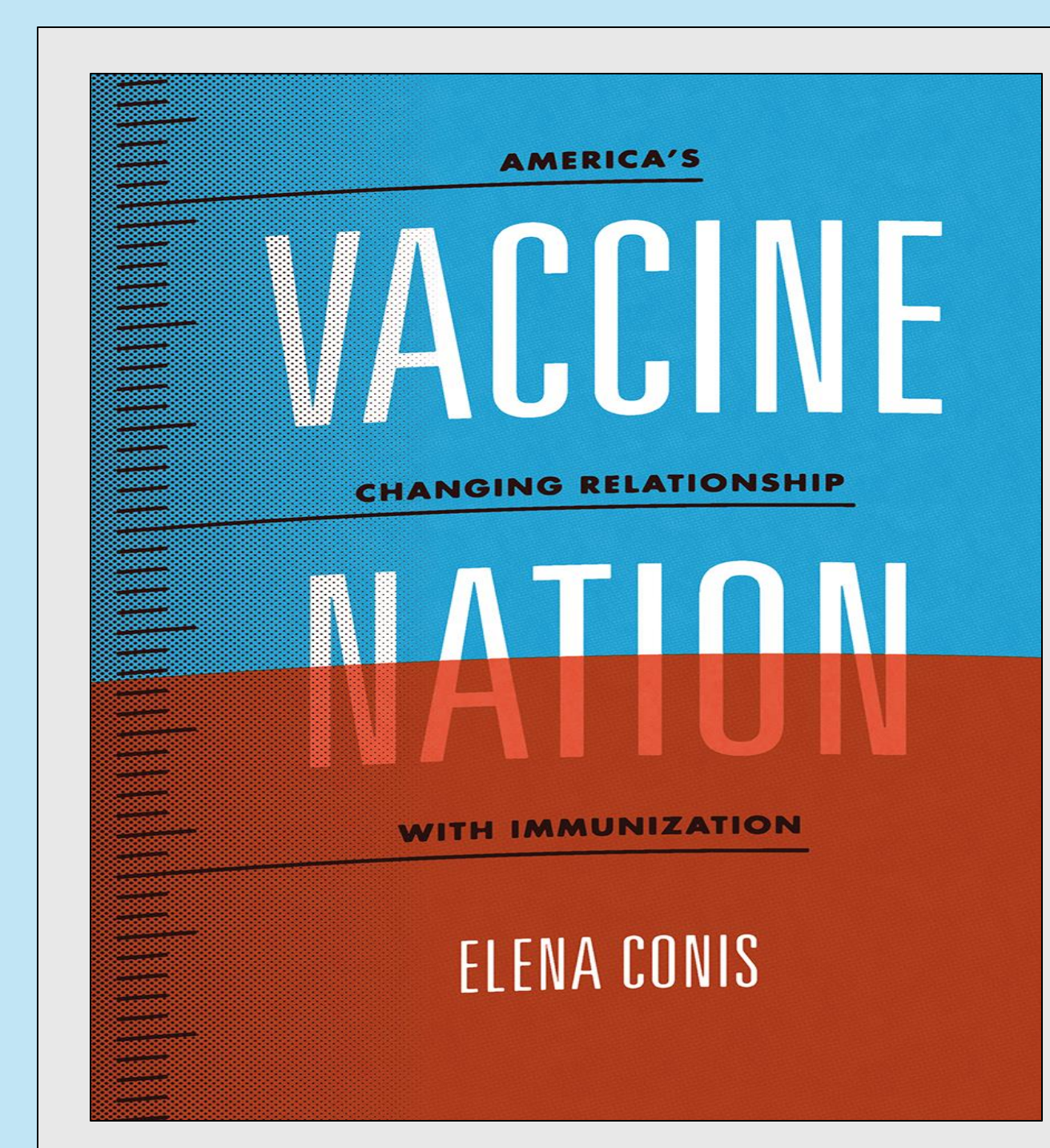
Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a sexually transmitted infection (HPV Infection). Gardasil is a vaccine administered to people over the age of nine to help prevent HPV (HPV Vaccine). Multiple doses are recommended to protect against various symptoms of HPV, including cervical, mouth, throat, and head cancers (Mayo Clinic Staff). The purpose of this research was to investigate attitudes towards vaccines in the recent past.

The research conducted took place in two stages: 1) analyzing broad sources of information related to attitudes towards vaccines, and 2) narrowing down past research collected to find a specific focus in vaccine research. Methods included reading two books (*Anti-Vax* and *Vaccine Nation*), conducting a literature review using PubMed, Cochrane Library, and Scopus, and then analyzing the resulting studies.

To find these articles, the key phrases were used: "HPV vaccine hesitancy," "college-aged women," and "HPV attitudes." From that, the focus was narrowed to a more specific research topic that aligned with Dr. Gabriel's research interest. Findings were drawn from surveys, readings, and analysis of scholarly articles. This research contributes to a broader understanding of attitudes toward vaccines and is a part of a larger project with potential public impact. Future ideas for this project could involve surveying college-aged women to assess their knowledge and attitudes towards the HPV vaccine.



"...studying vaccine controversy... has led me to understand it as a complex problem that it is much social as it is scientific" (Hausman 13).



A Harris Interactive poll taken in 2006 indicated that 70% of Americans believed encouraging women to get the HPV vaccine is a good way to prevent cervical cancer from spreading (Conis 230).

## Purpose:

To analyze historical and current attitudes towards vaccines with a specific focus on the HPV vaccine amongst college-aged women.

## Conclusion:

- Those who are vaccine hesitant want to be understood by their providers, not proven wrong.
- Practitioners' approaches have a profound impact on patients' willingness to receive a vaccine
- Media and political views are closely connected to vaccine attitudes
- Physicians who take a personalized and flexible approach and who advocate for their patients can more effectively build trust
- The HPV vaccine is underutilized and college-aged women should be better understood with regards to this vaccine

## Future Work:

- To survey 500+ undergraduate women at Florida State University regarding their knowledge and attitudes about the HPV vaccine.

## References:

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