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Human Papillomavirus (HPV) may cause bladder cancer

From our ANI Correspondent

Washington, Sept 26: A new research has revealed that Human Papillomavirus (HPV), a sexually transmitted disease, may cause bladder cancer.

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HPV is considered the cause of one of the most important sexually transmitted diseases nowadays, and affects both men and women.

The recent study carried out by the Department of Microbiology of the University of Granada, in collaboration with the Department of Biostatistics and the Urology Service of San Cecilio Hospital found that HPV might cause, in certain subjects, some types of cancer: cervical, anus, vulva, penis, oropharyngeal (the middle part of the throat behind the mouth

including the back of the tongue, the soft palate, the side and back walls of the throat) and bladder cancer.

The researchers from Granada have focused their study on bladder cancer and have found some evidence of the relationship between both diseases. Nevertheless, they warn that further research on this matter is needed, particularly in order to rule out the assumption that this infection is only a viral colonization and does not cause cancer (that is to say, the tumour appeared before the tissue was infected by the virus).

Jose Gutierrez Fernandez, the lead researcher of the study, explains that, in order to draw this preliminary conclusion, 44 articles related to this matter written by experts from all around the world were analysed.

"Our work consisted in a bibliographic review of the observational case studies published up to July 2005, in order to establish the degree of relationship found between bladder cancer and HPV infection," Gutierrez Fernandez said.

The study carried out at the UGR points out that the relationship between these two diseases depends on the method used: these scientists found different results depending on whether the research was based on the person's DNA or not.

"Of the 44 studies reviewed, in 39 the presence of DNA was studied. In the other 7 studies the HPV infection was studied through antigen or antibody detection," he added.

The great majority of these studies use PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) for the analysis. With this technique it is possible to duplicate as many times as desired a fragment of DNA in a test tube, and millions of identical molecules can be created from a single DNA molecule.

The relationship between HPV and bladder cancer might be due to the fact that the micro-organism, which generates the infection has DNA. Therefore, it acts directly on the cell nucleus and makes the cell cancerous. Moreover, the infection spreads quickly when healthy mucus comes into contact with infected mucus.

The research performed by the UGR points out that there might be a relationship between Human Papillomavirus infection and the appearance of the tumour.

"in order to draw a final conclusion, it is necessary to carry out a study with a sufficient number of cases and samples in which a combination of several microbiological techniques is applied to the same subject and sample," However, Gutierrez Fernandez said.

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