

## Cervical cancer vaccine Gardasil sparks reactions

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Natalie Tkaczuk Sikora  
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**ALMOST 500 girls have had adverse reactions such as seizures, rashes and paralysis after taking cervical cancer vaccine Gardasil in Australia since it was released in April.**

Of those, almost 200 Victorian schoolgirls were affected and 10 girls were admitted to hospital after fainting or collapsing following the jabs.

But leading experts defended the benefits of Gardasil and dismissed controversial reports of overseas deaths as unrelated and fictitious.

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**TELL US:** Have you experienced an adverse reaction to Gardasil? Post your story below.

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Doctors yesterday played down many side-effects as being unrelated, and said figures were low and what was expected in proportion to the number of doses dished out.

More than 13 million doses have been given worldwide.

Some 2.2 million Australian women have received the jab, with almost 500,000 in Victoria.

Gardasil guards against strains of the human papilloma virus that cause 70 per cent of cervical cancers, and is administered to girls under 18 through a national vaccination program.

As of November 30, there had been 496 adverse reaction reports to the Therapeutic Goods Association with the HPV vaccine as the sole suspected cause.

In the US more than 2220 reports were lodged in 12 months, including controversial reports of more than seven deaths.

But Gardasil co-creator Ian Frazer, the Health Department and manufacturer CSL yesterday dismissed allegations of associated deaths in the US, claiming the women died of unrelated causes.

Prof Frazer, a leading immunologist and former Australian of the Year, blamed anti-immunisation groups for exaggerating data as a scare tactic against inoculation.

Immunisation specialist Dr Jim Buttery, who works at the Royal Children's Hospital, declared Gardasil safe but said all reports were taken seriously.

Although the TGA refused to reveal detailed results, it said Gardasil was monitored by the US FDA and Centres for Disease Control, and in Australia by the Adverse Drug Reaction Advisory Committee, the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation and the National Immunisation Committee.

The TGA's Dr Rohan Hammett said: "All . . . advised that current rates of adverse reactions are consistent with those expected with any vaccine."

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