Post marketing surveillance of adverse events following vaccination is necessary to monitor vaccine safety. We published a peer-reviewed paper on adverse events following HPV vaccination that included data on emergency department (ED) visits or hospitalizations within 42 days of vaccination. We reported that of the 195,270 women that received 528,913 doses HPV of vaccine, 958 were hospitalized and 19,351 had an ED visit within 42 days of vaccination. We concluded that rates of adverse events after HPV vaccination in Alberta are low and consistent with those seen elsewhere. After publication all authors received unusual emails and interview requests and many social media postings were made about the article.


METHODS
We describe the sequence of events, hypotheses of the cause of these events, and actions taken. We hypothesize that two factors influenced the high rate of social media commentary: the paper's title, and the lack of contextualization of the health service utilization.

CONCLUSIONS
• Our experience demonstrates the importance of contextualizing results to minimize the misinterpretation of study findings.
• Have a communication plan in advance of submission.
• Social media may be used at the time of study publication to disseminate misinterpretations of research findings and researchers should prepare accordingly.

RESULTS
Timeline: February April May
HPV Paper is published Inquiry from a Canadian journalist Two interview requests from "independent" journalists UK tabloid journalist requested an interview Two academic researchers request data UofC Media Relations Communication plan: single contact person, standard responses, support for interviews.

Google Results:

SHOCK STUDY: Ten percent of Canadian females receiving ... www.vaccine.com/news/2016/04/06/HPV_vaccine_emergency_visit... - Intl. J. Cancer. Ten percent of Canadian females receiving HPV vaccine from March 2010 to March 2011 required emergency medical care because of a condition other than labeling. 0.36% of Edward J. O’Malley. "HPV vaccine and emergency care: evidence from a large Canadian cohort..." – Int J Cancer. 2015
15% of Canadian females receiving HPV vaccine in Emergency... www.vaccine.com/news/2016/04/06/HPV_vaccine_emergency_visit... - Intl. J. Cancer. Ten percent of Canadian females receiving HPV vaccine from March 2010 to March 2011 required emergency medical care because of a condition other than labeling. 0.36% of Edward J. O’Malley. "HPV vaccine and emergency care: evidence from a large Canadian cohort..." – Int J Cancer. 2015

Tweets: As of September 1, 2016: 516 tweets & 921,054 followers

Vaccine Choice Canada
Vaccine epidemic | @VaccineChoiceCA

15,270 females received 528,913 doses of HPV vaccine. 132 reported one or more ED visits. 3,553 tweets. https://twitter.com/VaccineChoiceCA

Engelth Foster

RT @HPV_europe: New Canadian Study! After HPV vaccine 70% of the girls End Up in Emergency Room! = https://twitter.com/HPV_europe

Oct 16 2016

Communications Plan:
One media spokesperson with media training replied to emails and conducted interviews.

Key Messages:
• The HPV vaccine is safe and effective.
• HPV can be prevented through immunization. The HPV vaccine helps protect against HPV.
• Safety is at the heart of immunization, from manufacturing to monitoring of those vaccinated.

Frequently Asked Questions: (Answer Guide not shown)
• What proportion of those vaccinated reported an adverse event?
• Why did you look at the 42 days?
• Was the ED utilization exceptionally high among those vaccinated?
• What were the reasons for hospitalization among those vaccinated?
• Does being vaccinated cause the hospitalization?