



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
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## **HeLa Cells, Cervical Cancer, and the HPV Vaccine**

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In this unit, I present the topic of cell biology and concentrate on the development, and prevention of cervical cancer to my 7<sup>th</sup> grade life-science students. I use an historical context to address the disparities that exist in cervical cancer rates across the country. Specifically, we explore if the disparities that exist in our healthcare system here in the United States are a product of the Jim Crow laws our country experienced after the Reconstruction Era and slavery. Martin Luther King said, “Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in healthcare is the most shocking and inhumane.” While reading excerpts from the book, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, we connect labs on cells, cell structure, cell membranes, including diffusion and osmosis, and eventually leading to mitosis and how abnormal cell growth can potentially develop cancer. We research and analyze how organizations such as Planned Parenthood combat the disparities that presently exist today. This unit addresses the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), the National Sexuality Education Standards, and the International Baccalaureate’s key concepts, related concepts, and global contexts.

(Developed for Life Science, grade 7; recommended for Biology, grade 9)

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