

Colombian president: No link of vaccine to illness

31 August 2014

Colombia's president is dismissing suggestions that a vaccine against cervical cancer is causing a mystery illness that has affected scores of teenage girls in a northern city.

President Juan Manuel Santos said Sunday that the Gardasil vaccine is safe and that no evidence has been found linking it to the symptoms reported in El Carmen de Bolivar.

More than 240 girls have complained of a variety of symptoms such as fainting, headaches and numbness in the hands. Parents have said all of the girls received the vaccine before the symptoms arose. Santos said scientists have several theories to explain the reports, including "collective suggestion" or mass hysteria.

Santos has asked Colombia's health minister to visit the area to discuss the benefits of the vaccine.

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