In 1979, his co-researchers Lutz Gissmann and Ethel-putzler, working in the same institute, isolated the virus that was suggested to be responsible for genital warts. They found this virus to be identical to HPV-6. In 1980, another research team, led by Michele de Villiers, isolated HPV-11. They used HPV-11 as a probe to search for other HPV types, and they found a new subtype of the HPV, HPV 16 and 18, were consistently found in about 70% of cervical cancer biopsies throughout the world. This discovery gave him the Nobel Prize in “Medicine or Physiology” in 1992. 

The majority of research during that decade were about herpes simplex virus type 2 (HSV-2) as the causative agent of cervical cancer. HPV during the 1980's was only known to cause genital warts or worse, cervical cancer. Note that the type of HPV that causes genital warts is different from the type of HPV that causes cervical cancer. Cervical cancers usually do not manifest until late stages, but early detection is crucial. Early detection is even more important for women because of the high mortality rate of cervical cancer. Following HPV-6, they discovered HPV-11. They used HPV-11 as a probe and one out of 24 different HPV types were isolated. Then, in 1983, they were able to isolate the virus that was discovered to cause cervical cancer. HPV-16 and HPV-18 respectively.

HPV-16 and HPV-18 respectively. In 1983 and 1984, they were able to isolate the virus that is now found to be more than 95% effective in protecting women from HPV acquisition. HPV has no therapeutic effects on existing HPV infections. It also has no effect on existing HPV infections. However, it can lead to the development of vaccines. Following HPV-6, they discovered HPV-11. They used HPV-11 as a probe and one out of 24 different HPV types were isolated. Then, in 1983, they were able to isolate the virus that was discovered to cause cervical cancer. HPV-16 and HPV-18 respectively.

In 1972, he was appointed chairman of the Institute of Clinical Virology in Erlangen-Nürnberg. Amidst the prevailing medical beliefs, researches and scientific norms during his time, Harald zur Hausen discovered and proved, amidst all the scepticisms, that a previously unrecognized virus was the cause of cervical cancer. This discovery paved the way to a better understanding of cervical cancer. Furthermore, it led to the development of vaccines. In the following years, he was able to isolating increasing number of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) novel subtypes. In 1979, his co-researchers Lutz Gissmann and Ethel-putzler, working in the same institute, isolated the virus that was suggested to be responsible for genital warts. They found this virus to be identical to HPV-6. In 1980, another research team, led by Michele de Villiers, isolated HPV-11. They used HPV-11 as a probe to search for other HPV types, and they found a new subtype of the HPV, HPV 16 and 18, were consistently found in about 70% of cervical cancer biopsies throughout the world. This discovery gave him the Nobel Prize in “Medicine or Physiology” in 1992.