

## The Cutter Incident: From the US National Library of Medicine (NIH)

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3096324/>

“One of the true tragedies of the vaccine era occurred with the Cutter Laboratories incident in 1955, in which inadvertent inclusion of live polio vaccine in the killed Salk vaccine resulted in 40,000 cases of abortive (transient) polio, 51 cases of paralytic polio, and 5 deaths. Immediate action was taken to discontinue that vaccine; however, why were known detrimental side effects of the subsequent live attenuated vaccine (OPV) tolerated for many years? Since the introduction of OPV by Dr. Sabin in the early 1960s, it was known that roughly 4 or 5 children in the United States per year would acquire vaccine-associated paralytic polio (VAPP). In the early 1960s, this was felt to be acceptable based on the superiority of the live vaccine in that it provided greater herd immunity, eliminated the carrier state, proved more cost effective, was easier to administer, and exponentially reduced transmission compared to the less effective killed vaccine (IPV). These infrequent cases of VAPP need to be considered in the context of the late 1950s prior to polio vaccination, when more than 16,000 children per year in the United States were afflicted with natural paralytic polio. As a result of this vaccine, not a single case of natural polio was reported in North America by the year 1978, which was a major public health advance. Vaccine experts anticipated global polio eradication by the 21st century. For a number of reasons, this did not occur.”