



## The “End” of Polio?

A Bruno Byte

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There are significant concerns about “The End of Polio.” For every symptomatic case of polio as many as 200 people carry the poliovirus for months in their intestines with NO symptoms but can spread the virus everywhere they go. We will need to wait 6 more years to see if the new deadly mutation of Type 1 poliovirus that killed 40% of young adult cases the Congo is gone. If not, who will pay for a brand NEW polio vaccine for the mutated Type 1 virus? Probably the US, since Americans are not fully protected by the current polio vaccine.

As for the eradication of "polio" only the 3 poliovirus strains have been targeted. There are as many as 100 OTHER polio-like viruses that can do identical damage to the brain and spinal cord and have similar if not identical clinical presentations – paralysis and even death -- and similar life-long impact. The sad example of this is India. India had 200,000 Type 1, 2 or 3 wild poliovirus cases each year. Now there are no Type 1, 2 or 3 poliovirus cases. Instead, there are 60,000 cases each year of paralysis and death caused by some of the OTHER "polioviruses" for which there are NO vaccines, cases documented by the Indian National Polio Surveillance Program and by papers published in Indian medical journals<sup>1</sup>

"The 60,000" are clearly an embarrassment. A few years ago the Indian Parliament asked me to create post-polio clinics in India. The Indian Medical Association was ready to disseminate Post-Polio Institute treatment information across India, the first hospital clinic was designated and staff ready for training. Then I asked that polio survivors *and* those paralyzed by the "other polioviruses" be treated at the clinics. The Indian government cancelled the post-polio clinics and doctor training and my e-mails were no longer returned.

### **Crying Wolf AND Closing Our Eyes**

In the US we saw EV-68 cause 101 cases of muscle weakness and a few of paralysis during the summer of 2014. Some doctors were screaming about the birth of "new polio epidemics" and the need for a new vaccine. In the summer of 2015 we saw no EV-68 epidemic nor a new “polio” vaccine.

EV-71 caused widespread paralysis in Brazil about 10 years ago. And West Nile virus, not a polio enterovirus but one carried by mosquitoes, caused an epidemic of US cases more recently with damage and symptoms identical to polio plus a "post-West Nile" syndrome identical to Post-Polio Sequelae. Is there a West Nile vaccine? Nope.

The Chinese are reportedly working on vaccines for some of "the other" polioviruses. And well they should. Our research and a study published in May 2015 found that the triggers for US polio epidemics beginning in World War II were the movement of large numbers of people from rural areas to the cities and their crowding into apartment buildings, exactly what's happening in China today. As

for the hundreds of thousands of "other" poliovirus cases around the world each year who ultimately go on to develop PPS, they'll have to fend for themselves with even fewer resources than American polio survivors with Post-Polio Sequelae.

My fear? "Polio Gone. Polio survivors? Completely forgotten."



### **The Encyclopedia of Polio and Post-Polio Sequelae**

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