



# Polio Australia Incorporated

Representing polio survivors throughout Australia



## e-Bulletin October Reflections 2011

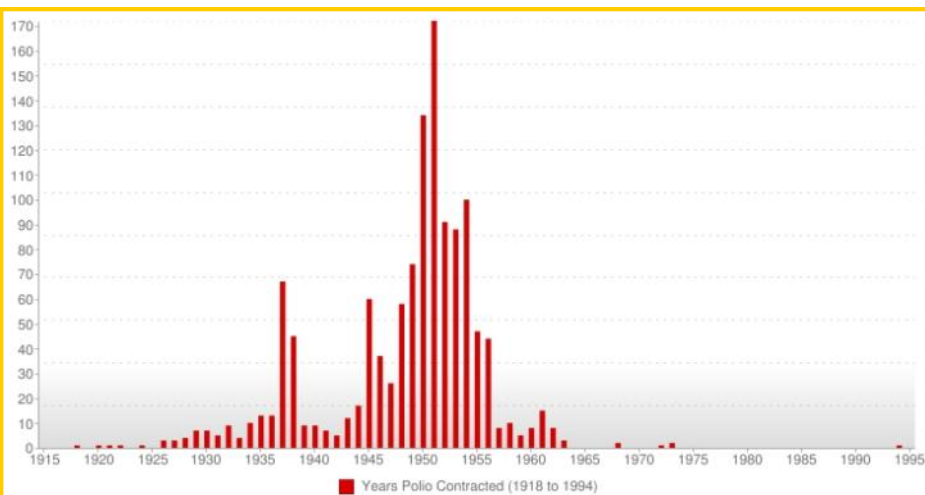
The birds are singing, the flowers are blooming, it must be Spring! It's time for those of us in the Southern Hemisphere to start enjoying the longer, warmer days. Australia has also been celebrating a month of Polio Awareness activities during October. Polio Australia got on board with PHI's (Post-Polio Health International) "We're Still Here" campaign week from the 8th to the 15th; followed by Rotary's "World Polio Day" on the 24th; and concluding with "The End of Polio" Concert in Perth on the 28th (*Jonas Salk's birthday*), to coincide with the CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) Conference. We were delighted with the announcement by the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, that Australia has pledged \$50M towards eradicating polio. I'm sure polio survivors, both in Australia and everywhere else in the world, would welcome this momentous event. But as there is currently no Federal Government funding allocated for Australia's polio survivors, we need to keep reminding policy makers and funding bodies alike that "We're Still Here!" and will be for many years to come . . .

*No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow*  
~ Proverb

### In this e-Bulletin

- ◆ [Australian Polio Register](#)
- ◆ [The End of Polio Concert](#)
- ◆ [Australia Pledges \\$50m for Polio Eradication](#)
- ◆ [47M in Health and Medical Research Funding](#)
- ◆ [Independent Living Centres Australia](#)
- ◆ [Dietary Supplements and Mortality Rate](#)
- ◆ [China Polio Outbreak](#)
- ◆ [Polio Linked to Heat-Affected Vaccines](#)
- ◆ [No Polio Outbreak in South Africa](#)
- ◆ [Statistical Model-Spread of Wild Polioviruses](#)
- ◆ [Scathing Report: Polio Eradication](#)
- ◆ [Polio This Week](#)

### Australian Polio Register



There are currently 1488 polio survivors on the Australian Polio Register and this number increases daily. However, we know there are many more thousands of polio survivors out there. Because we have limited resources to promote the Polio Register widely in the community we are enlisting your help to spread the word. **To make the Australian Polio Register truly reflective of the unmet need for polio services throughout Australia, we urge every Australian polio survivor to join the Polio Register.**

Statistical data (derived from the current total registrations received), including charts and maps displaying when and where polio was contracted, can be found through [this page](#). Both the numbers of polio survivors on the Register and the associated statistical data are updated dynamically as each new registration is recorded online. The publishable data in the Register can be sorted in various ways (family name, maiden name, given names, birth year, polio year, age at which polio contracted, or location where polio contracted) – just click the appropriate button to go to the particular sort order in which you are interested.

If you recognise a childhood friend or friends in the Register with whom you would like to be re-acquainted, please [let us know](#) and we will endeavour to assist you to get back in touch with each other.

## The End of Polio Concert



On Friday 28th October thousands of Australians joined an incredible line up of artists at the Belvoir Amphitheatre in Perth, Australia to raise their voices in support of polio eradication. The Concert set out to highlight our generation's opportunity to end this debilitating disease, and change the course of history. Thousands of campaign supporters from around the country came together to hear live music from a great line-up of national and international music stars, and raise their voices in support of investment in polio eradication. Also invited to speak was Indian born Canadian polio survivor, [Ramesh Ferris](#). Ramesh is a popular public speaker on the subject of polio eradication.

As Commonwealth leaders met to discuss global and Commonwealth issues, "[The End of Polio](#)" campaigners combined the power and the pull of a concert with the passion and influence of a community driven movement - to propel polio eradication onto the international agenda.

The culmination of months of local campaigning, "[The End of Polio Concert](#)" brought together thousands of people to call on world leaders to realise this monumental opportunity - providing a compelling mandate for Australian, and Commonwealth, leaders to invest in polio eradication efforts and close the funding gap currently limiting vaccination efforts.

## Australia Pledges \$50m for Polio Eradication

Source: *Chris Johnsonin, Canberra Times - 30 October 2011*

Prime Minister Julia Gillard has used the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth to flag her intention to significantly boost Australia's commitment to wiping out polio worldwide. Australia will give \$50million over four years to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative for the purchase of vaccines and to monitor and respond to polio outbreaks.

Shortly before starting the conference's two-day leaders' retreat at Perth's Kings Park yesterday, Ms Gillard was joined in making the announcement by British Prime Minister David Cameron, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani and Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan.



Ms Gillard pointed out that when the Queen first visited Perth in 1954, it was in the grip of a polio epidemic to which former Labor leader and current ambassador to Washington Kim Beazley fell victim as a child.

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates joined in the announcement via videolink and said his foundation - the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation - would pledge a further \$US40million (\$A37.3million) to the initiative. Mr Gates praised the Australian Government for putting the polio issue on the CHOGM agenda.

Read the full article [here](#).

## \$47 Million in Health and Medical Research Funding to Meet the Challenges of Ageing

Source: *The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Mental Health Reform, Media Release - 17 October 2011*

Health and medical research into dementia, Parkinson's disease, bone disease and other major age-related conditions will benefit from \$47 million in Australian Government funding, the Minister for Mental Health and Ageing, Mark Butler, said today.

Mr Butler today announced funding for 93 National Health and Medical Research grants focused on ageing. "*The research we are funding is helping Australians to live and lead longer, healthier and more productive lives as they age.*"

The full Media Release can be read [here](#). Further information on all NHMRC grants announced today can be found at [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au).

## Independent Living Centres Australia (ILCA)



The ILCA is a collective organisation with members in each of the Australian states and the ACT. Its role is to advance a federal agenda on issues and needs at a national level. The ILCA also provides information and advice to government and policymakers and raises awareness of the role assistive technology plays in maintaining health and wellbeing in the Australian community.

The ILCA's member organisations are leading providers of information and advice on an extensive range of assistive technology that can help individuals improve their quality of life and remain independent. Use the links on the [ILCA's website](#) to find your local service.

You can also search ILCA's Equipment Database for: Beds and bed equipment; Building requirements and design ideas; Clothing and dressing aids; Computer access and environmental control; Continence products; Eating and drinking aids; Hire Organisations and Resources; Household aids; Hygiene; Library; Lifting, transferring and standing equipment; Phones, communication, reading and writing aids; Recreation; Seating; Transport; Vocational aids and equipment; Walking and mobility aids; and Wheelchairs, scooters, cushions and ramps.

Each state organisation assists a wide range of people from all walks of life. Clients include older people who wish to remain independent in their homes for as long as possible, as well as children and adults with a disability. Throughout Australia, demand for assistive technology is growing as a result of increasing community interest in healthy ageing and recognition of universal rights to independence and access.

*Assistive technology helps people to maximise their independence and their ability to manage everyday tasks whether in the home, workplace, or out in the community.*

## Vitamin and Mineral Supplement Use in Relation to All-Cause Mortality in the Iowa Women's Health Study - Comment on "Dietary Supplements and Mortality Rate in Older Women"

Goran Bjelakovic, MD, DMSc; Christian Gluud, MD, DMSc

Source: *Arch Intern Med* - 11 October 2011

*"Based on existing evidence, we see little justification for the general and widespread use of dietary supplements, unless there is a medical reason or deficiency of a particular nutrient,"* wrote the study authors, most of whom are affiliated with the University of Minnesota.

*"In agreement with our hypothesis, most of the supplements studied were not associated with a reduced total mortality rate in older women. In contrast, we found that several commonly used dietary vitamin and mineral supplements, including multivitamins, vitamins B6, and folic acid, as well as minerals iron, magnesium, zinc, and copper, were associated with a higher risk of total mortality. Of particular concern, supplemental iron was strongly and dose dependently associated with increased total mortality risk. Also, the association was consistent across shorter intervals, strengthened with multiple use reports and with increasing age at reported use. Supplemental calcium was consistently inversely related to total mortality rate; however, no clear dose-response relationship was observed - iron is suggested to catalyze reactions that produce oxidants and thus promote oxidative stress."*

Dietary supplementation has shifted from preventing deficiency to trying to promote wellness and prevent diseases. Consumers believe that vitamin and mineral supplements are safe and use them without the supervision of their physicians. Until recently, the available data regarding the adverse effects of dietary supplements has been limited and grossly underreported.

*"We think the paradigm "the more the better" is wrong. One should consider the likely U-shaped relationship between micronutrient status and health. We believe that for all micronutrients, risks are associated with insufficient and too-large intake. Low levels of intake increase the risk of deficiency. High levels of intake increase the risk of toxic effects and disease. Therefore, we believe that politicians and regulatory authorities should wake up to their responsibility to allow only safe products on the market."*



Read the full research summary [here](#).

## China Vaccinates 4.5M Children, Young Adults Against Polio After Outbreak

Source: Tan Ee Lyn, Reuters, Hong Kong - 18 October 2011

"China vaccinated 4.5 million children and young adults over the last five weeks in the western region of Xinjiang in a fight against polio after the disease paralyzed 17 people and killed one of them," the World Health Organization said, according to [Reuters](#). This is the first outbreak of polio in China since 1999, "and scientists say the strain originated from Pakistan, one of four remaining countries where polio is endemic," the news service writes.

## Polio Cases Linked to Heat-Affected Vaccines

Source: Mukhtar Alam, Dawn.com, Karachi - 24 October 2011



A Pakistani man wheels a child, Jamshed, 8, who suffers from polio on the outskirts of the capital Islamabad on July 6, 2011. According to the World Health organization (WHO) Pakistan tops the list of four countries where the polio disease still exists despite the global campaign to get rid of it. – AFP Photo

Health authorities in Sindh have expressed doubts about the efficacy of polio vaccines provided by the World Health Organisation for use during immunisation campaigns against the dreaded disease, which has affected 27 children

in Sindh so far this year, it emerged on Monday.

Polio officials and field workers, concerned at the detection of the cases among the children who had received a number of oral polio vaccine doses during polio campaigns, fear polio vaccines may not be as effective as they should be, said a source in the health department, adding that the WHO had recently been requested to provide Oral Polio Vaccines (OPV) with zero-stage vaccine vial monitor (VVM).

The provincial health department also took up the issues of stability of OPV at different temperatures, particularly the vaccine's maintenance at the end-user places. Reports say that the OPV with a late stage VVM (indicating that a vaccine has been exposed to heat for long) have also been used during campaigns due to inconsistent cold chains, low-level education of workers or for other reasons, the source added.

However, experts maintained that there was a margin of safety built into the VVM so that even a late stage VVM might be potent, but the vaccine had had enough exposure to heat that it should be discarded because it was potentially weakened. Using a vaccine with a late-stage VVM is not harmful, but it might not offer immunity, it was further noted.

Read the full report [here](#).

## No Polio Outbreak in South Africa

Source: Zinhle Mapumulo, The New Age, 25 October 2011

The Department of Health has assured the public that there is no need for panic after a 10-month-old baby with a very rare and severe congenital immune system condition developed polio after being given an oral polio vaccination. The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) confirmed at the weekend that the baby, from Gauteng, had developed the rare complication which has occurred in only 23 people across the world since the introduction of the oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) in the previous century.

Fidel Hadebe, national Department of Health spokesperson, said: "The NICD became aware of the case recently through their monitoring programme." He assured the public that there was no need to panic because, "South Africa remains free of polio".

The last confirmed case of polio in South Africa was in 1989. However, the threat of imported polio remains a possibility as has been demonstrated by polio outbreaks in formerly polio-free African countries.

Read the full report [here](#).

## A Statistical Model of the International Spread of Wild Poliovirus in Africa Used to Predict and Prevent Outbreaks

Source: PLoS Magazine, published online - 18 October 2011

Using outbreak data from 2003-2010, researchers were able to develop a statistical model of the spread of wild polioviruses in Africa that can predict polio outbreaks six months in advance.

Kathleen O'Reilly of Imperial College London, UK and colleagues indicated that outbreaks of polio in Africa over the study period resulted mainly from continued transmission in Nigeria and other countries that reported polio cases, and from poor immunization status.

The authors highlight how the geographical risk of polio is changing over time in Africa, saying "As the incidence of polio in Nigeria has remained very low in 2010 and 2011, there may be a unique opportunity to eliminate polio from Africa in the near-term through targeted vaccination informed by appropriate predictive models." Read details of the research [here](#).

## Scathing Report: Polio Eradication "Not... Any Time Soon"

Source: [Maryn McKenna](#), Wired Science Blog - 22 October 2011

An independent monitoring board convened by the worldwide polio-eradication initiative has delivered a [report on the global effort](#) that is striking for its brutally frank and even frustrated tone. Among its findings, just in its first few pages: "Case numbers are rising"; "unwelcome surprises continue"; "as many milestones are being missed as are being met"; and "the (eradication) Programme is not on track for its end-2012 goal, or for any time soon after unless fundamental problems are tackled." Possibly the biggest problem, the board concludes, is a get-it-done optimism so ingrained in the 23-year effort that it cannot acknowledge when things are not working. Read the full article [here](#).

## [Polio this week](#) as of Wednesday 26 October 2011

Source: Polio Global Eradication Initiative

A new web site on social data for polio eradication was launched this week by UNICEF: [www.polioinfo.org](http://www.polioinfo.org). Polio eradication efforts rely heavily on a range of social data that help shed light on, among other things, the reasons some communities are refusing to vaccinate their children with oral polio vaccine (OPV). The web site, which will be fully integrated with [www.polioeradication.org](http://www.polioeradication.org), aims to support and strengthen communication efforts in all the polio priority countries by making this critical social data easier to access.

In Pakistan, 14 new cases are reported in the past week - it is the highest number of new cases reported in a single week ever. See 'Pakistan' section below for more information.

In Nigeria, polio has spread more widely in the past two months than at any time over the last two years.

Total cases	Year-to-date 2011	Year-to-date 2010	Total in 2010*
Globally	489	747	1349
• in endemic countries:	217	163	232
• in non-endemic countries:	272	584	1117

### Please pass this e-Bulletin on to friends and colleagues who have an interest in the late effects of polio

- ◆ If you are not the original recipient of this e-Bulletin and would like to receive it directly in future, please email us [here](#).
- ◆ If you do not wish to receive any further communication from Polio Australia, please email us [here](#).

[Polio Australia Incorporated](#)

PO Box 500 Kew East Vic 3102

Suite 119C, 89 High Street Kew Vic 3101

Telephone: (03) 9016 7678 ◆ Mobile: 0466 718 222

E-mail: [office@polioaustralia.org.au](mailto:office@polioaustralia.org.au) ◆ Website: [www.polioaustralia.org.au](http://www.polioaustralia.org.au)