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Gaza's Children Don't Need Polio Vaccine, They Need Peace and Clean Water!

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The single case of polio in Gaza triggered a global outcry and an appeal by the UN, which obtained the agreement of the United States and Israel to send 1.2 million doses of vaccine (at our expense, of course).

But who are we kidding? Why vaccinate children at all costs whose main risk is to be victims of the ongoing war? Why vaccinate children against a disease that can be completely eradicated by drinking water?

Clean Water Is Enough to Eradicate Polio

The polio virus is transmitted only by the fecal-oral route. The virus excreted in the stools of a patient contaminates the water consumed by the population without being sanitized. The transmission of polio viruses is therefore made impossible by the distribution of drinking water and the treatment of wastewater. This explains why polio is no longer observed in countries that provide basic hygiene to their population and why epidemics occur in countries that do not.

Providing clean water to the people of Gaza would surely eradicate any new cases of polio.

cVDPV2 Vaccine-Derived Viruses Resurrect Polio

Like any active treatment, polio vaccines carry complications.

In India, vaccinations were followed by a dramatic increase in the incidence of non-polio flaccid paralysis statistically linked to vaccination campaigns.[1]

There were three strains of wild poliovirus: wild poliovirus type 1, wild poliovirus type 2, and wild poliovirus type 3. The latter two strains have not been reported for nearly 15 years. The only wild poliovirus type 1 in the world remains in circulation in two countries where clean water is critically scarce: Afghanistan and Pakistan.

But polio persists, mainly due to viruses derived from the cVDPV2 vaccine. This vaccine used an inactivated strain allowing its oral administration; but because it was a live virus, it could be transmitted from person to person like wild viruses in countries lacking drinking water; and by passing from one individual to another it sometimes regains its original virulence.

Since the oral polio vaccine (OPV) was first identified in 2000 as responsible for an outbreak

of paralytic polio, vaccine-derived polioviruses (VDPVs) have been a challenge to polio eradication. In 2016, the serotype 2 component of the oral polio vaccine given to children was withdrawn from the market. Children around the world now have little immunity to serotype 2 poliovirus because the inactivated vaccine is much less effective and a new oral vaccine is not yet available.[2]

In 2020, 959 human cases of cVDPV2 and 411 environmental samples positive for cVDPV2 were reported globally[3] from 27 countries, including 21 countries in the African region and 6 countries in the Eastern Mediterranean region, European region and Western Pacific region.

The number of cases and environmental samples positive for cVDPV increased in 2020 compared to 2019, when 366 cases and 173 environmental samples positive for cVDPV2 were reported.

In 2020, the Sudanese Federal Ministry of Health informed WHO that circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 had been detected in the country. In 2023, Indonesia reported four cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2), including three cases in Aceh province and one case in West Java province .[4] In 2023, 13 cases of type 2 poliovirus variants were identified, distributed across two regions of Cameroon: Central (12 cases) and Far North (1 case).[5]

In the United Kingdom, Israel, and several counties in New York State, traces of PVDV have been detected in sewage. And in July 2022, a case of paralysis due to a vaccine-derived virus was identified near New York City[6,7] in a young man.

The United States has now met the criteria to be added to the list of countries where vaccine-derived polioviruses are circulating, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced.[8] "*Genetic sequences of the virus from the Rockland County patient and sewage samples collected in New York City have been linked to sewage samples in Jerusalem, Israel, and London, United Kingdom, indicating community transmission* ."

If polio eradication had been driven by widespread access to clean water, it would have been achieved by now.

In Gaza, War Is Far More Deadly Than Polio

The UN states that over the past ten months thousands of children have died, collateral victims of the war in Gaza and "beyond *these tragic deaths, tens of thousands of other boys and girls suffer from injuries that have marked their bodies forever and caused immeasurable damage to their mental health*."

So why all the media coverage of a single case of polio, if not to ensure huge profits for the pharmaceutical industry?

Especially since providing them with drinking water would, in addition to preventing poliomyelitis, help them avoid cholera, hepatitis A, typhoid, etc.

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This article was translated from French via AI translation.

Notes

[1] Rachana Dhiman and al Correlation between Non-Polio Acute Flaccid Paralysis Rates with Pulse Polio Frequency in India International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health August 15, 2018

[2] GR Macklin Evolution of the epidemiology of poliovirus serotype 2 after withdrawal of oral poliovirus vaccine serotype 2 Science Vol. 368, No. 6489 p. 401 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3014-7447

[3] https://www.who.int/fr/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/circulating-vaccine-derived-poliovirus-type-2-global-update

[4] World Health Organization (11 January 2024). Disease Outbreak Newsletter; Circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) — Indonesia. Available at: https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2024-DON500

[5] https://www.gavi.org/fr/vaccineswork/cameroun-fait-equipe-avec-voisins-contenir-polio

[6] https://www.20minutes.fr/sante/3346363-20220905-new-york-resurgence-polio-inquiete-autorites-population

[7] https://www.ouest-france.fr/monde/etats-unis/aux-etats-unis-un-premier-cas-de-polio-a-ete-detecte-depuis-pres-d-une -decennie-7d4b2cb4-09bd-11ed-89ff-d7b4632af60c

[8] https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0913-polio.html

[9] https://news.un.org/fr/story/2024/08/1147761

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