

Polio Perspective

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POLIO HAS ERUPTED IN SYRIA

By Dr. Richard Bruno

The World Health Organization says it believes polio has erupted in war-torn Syria, a dire development in the fight to eradicate the disease.

The Geneva-based agency says a cluster of more than 10 paralysis cases have been detected in Deir Al Zour province in eastern Syria, a contested area of the country. Initial tests indicate polio is the cause, and efforts to address what could be a crisis situation are being geared up.

Dr. Bruce Aylward says the potential exists for a large scale outbreak that will take some time to bring under control. That's because the collapse of health services during the civil war has meant there are young children in Syria who haven't been vaccinated. Final confirmation may take a few more days, but Aylward says the WHO is assuming the worst.

The unwelcome development is the latest setback for the global effort to eradicate polio, already 13 YEARS behind schedule and billions of dollars over original cost estimates.

While polio remains endemic — meaning transmission has never been stopped — in only Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria, several countries this year have seen spread of polio resume as a result of imported viruses. Among them is SOMALIA, where polio vaccination efforts were abandoned for four years because of conflict in the southern part of the country.

"The potential is ... to have a large scale outbreak with a couple of hundred cases that takes some time to get back under control, very definitely," Aylward says. "If these cases are confirmed we're going to need six months of almost monthly campaigns to try and shut this down. "

Prior to the war, Syria had high vaccination coverage. But the Global Polio Eradication Initiative knows that there are children born since the unrest began in the spring of 2011 who will not have received even a single dose of polio vaccine.

"These are young kids, less than two years of age, and generally unvaccinated," Aylward says of the children in the cluster. "To be honest, a lot of the data isn't good enough to know really how bad the underlying immunity situation might be right now. Obviously this is the toughest environment anyone's going to have to work in right now."

Aylward says a number of countries in the region — Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria — were already planning major polio vaccination campaigns for November and December, before these possible cases were detected.

<http://www.leaderpost.com/health>

FOR POLIO SURVIVORS WORRIED ABOUT SWALLOWING PROBLEMS: It ain't just you!

From DoctorDirectory.com.

Oral Medication and Adherence Challenges

Dosage Form: Pill vs. Capsule

The fact that simple, once-daily dosing still fails to reach 100% suggests other factors and barriers to compliance other than dosing regimen. A 2003 Harris Interactive survey of 679 adults found that 40% of U.S. adults experience discomfort when swallowing pills. Nearly 20% of those who have taken oral medication reported having hesitated prior to taking the pills because they feared they might have trouble swallowing them due to size of the pill or its shape. Of those who have experienced difficulty swallowing, 80% report having the pill stuck in their throat, 48% report having a bad after taste and 32% report gagging. This study supports the assertion that difficulty swallowing pills negatively impacts medication adherence as it found that 14% reported delaying doses, 8% reported skipping doses, and 4% reported discontinuing medication due to difficulty swallowing it.

The process of swallowing requires cooperation between a number of structures in the mouth and throat, and as one ages, swallowing may become more difficult as esophageal motor function and coordination decline. Also, neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease can affect the efficiency of the swallowing mechanism. Stroke and cancer of the head and neck may also result in dysphagia resulting in swallowing difficulties.

Furthermore, many patients fail to voluntarily express important treatment preferences or barriers to adherence such as difficulty swallowing medication. It has been estimated that less than a quarter of people who have difficulty swallowing their pills discuss the problem with their healthcare professional. It is also important to take into account patient preferences as they relate to oral medication in pill and capsule dosage forms. A 1982 study found that patients preferred capsules to pills due to ease of swallowing and capsules were associated with greater efficacy. A 2001 study designed to investigate the swallow ability and patient preferences of tablets and capsules found that in general, capsules were preferred over tablets.

In conclusion, discomfort when swallowing tablets is common and a great many patients are unable or unwilling to swallow pills which may lead to a negative outcome of their therapy. As patients may be reluctant to discuss their ability to comply with oral medication, healthcare providers should initiate discussions and encourage patients to be more forthcoming with their concerns and look for alternative dosage forms and regimens

that may improve compliance.

Web Corner

The Woman Who Lived in a Tube for 61 years:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2450792/The-woman-lived-iron-lung-61-YEAR.html>

Zappy Pro Flex Scooter (handy for traveling):

<http://www.campingworld.com/shopping/item/zappy-3-pro-flex-scooter/54935>

Polio Survivors Network:

<http://www.poliosurvivorsnetwork.org.uk/>

Accessible Traveling:

<http://www.travelinwheels.com/bookingpage.aspx>

After 30 years they are still in concert (Chave Willig Levy and her husband)

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/04/booming/after-30-years-theyre-still-in-concert.html?ref=booming&_r=2&pagewanted=all&

Medicare Plan Finder:

[https://medicare.gov/find-a-plan/\(X\(1\)S\(axf221brcz45m255n12wtjmb\)\)/questions/home.aspx?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1](https://medicare.gov/find-a-plan/(X(1)S(axf221brcz45m255n12wtjmb))/questions/home.aspx?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1)

Promoting Positive Solutions:

<http://www.post-polio.org/edu/pphnews/pph26-2sp10p8-9.pdf>

People With Disabilities Are Not III!

<http://www.transfermaster.com/blog/view-post/People-With-Disabilities-Are-Not-III>

Post Polio Health International article:

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=579998918727812&id=173414896052885

10 Ways to Restore Energy When You Are Burned Out

<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-8389/10-ways-to-restore-energy-when-youre-exhausted-or-burned-out.html>

Xanthodontous

By LaVonne Schonemann

(An adjective called "xanthodontous..." it means one having yellow teeth)

An angry dragon

baring xanthodontous teeth

crept out of the crypt

wherein my deepest darkest

demons lay... Post-polio day!

Like jack-in-the-box

(no matter where or how I

hide it) UP it pops!

Turkey Is A Vegetable

(a repeat in honor of Thanksgiving)

By Millie Malone Lill

Here it is, Thanksgiving time again. My doctor has put me on a low-fat vegetarian diet. How do I reconcile this diet with the National Holiday Pastime: Eating? I read labels, I make informed decisions, I watch what I eat. And I lie.

Look at it this way. What do turkeys eat? Corn and oats, right? Are corn and oats not vegetable (as opposed to animal or mineral)? OK, then. Turkey meat is made up of recycled corn and oats, so it is a vegetable. Sweet potatoes? Vegetable! Pumpkin pie? Again, pumpkin is a vegetable. This diet is not as bad as I thought.

Let's see now. Turkey dressing: Onion (vegetable), celery(vegetable), sage (vegetable), bread crumbs (not vegetable, but not meat). Sure it has turkey broth, but we've already established that turkey is a vegetable, so that's OK. And I always saute my celery and onions in vegetable oil or margarine made of corn (vegetable) oil. I believe I'm getting in the swing of this thing!

Whipped cream is going to present a problem. Well, if I get the non-dairy kind, it is mostly nice healthy chemicals, so it shouldn't count. Coffee is made from beans, clearly of the vegetable persuasion. Chocolate-covered cherries. Hmmm. Chocolate comes from cacao beans. Bingo! Another vegetable! Cherries are fruit, so that is OK. I guess fudge is pretty much the same kind of vegetable as the chocolate covered cherries, more or less.

Potatoes are definitely vegetables, so mashed potatoes and gravy will be allowed. You can't eat mashed potatoes without gravy! Cornbread is mostly vegetable. Waldorf Salad has apples, nuts, and marshmallows, all of them vegetables or fruits. Marshmallows are so vegetables! They come from the mallow plants that grow in marshes, of course. Fruitcake, is of course, fruit, so I can eat all I want of that.

Sugar comes from sugarcane or sugar beets, both definitely plants, therefore sugar is a vegetable. Since sugar is a vegetable, that means all candy, which is mainly sugar is acceptable on this diet. The diet is, after all, low-fat, not sugar-free. Ah yes, the fat. Most of the above vegetables are rather high in fat content. I'm not sure how I'll lower the fat content of all these foods. I know, if I eat off the floor, the fat will be lower than if I eat off the table! There you have it. I'm sure after a couple of months on this low-fat vegetarian diet, I will be slim and trim. If I can get up off the floor that is.

I hope all of you have a wonderful Thanksgiving. Take care of yourselves and by all means, be sure to eat all your vegetables.

A Little Bit of Humor

A stingy old lawyer who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness was determined to prove wrong the saying, "You can't take it with you."

After much thought and consideration, the old ambulance-chaser finally figured out how to take at least some of his money with him when he died. He instructed his wife to go to the bank and withdraw enough money to fill two pillow cases. He then directed her to take the bags of money to the attic and leave them directly above his bed so that when he died he could grab them on his way to heaven.

Several weeks after the funeral, the deceased lawyer's wife, up in the attic cleaning, came upon the two forgotten pillow cases stuffed with cash.

"Oh, that darned old fool," she exclaimed. "I knew he should have had me put the money in the basement."