

Why have we failed to eradicate polio from India?

Yash Paul, MB;BS, DCH

Consultant Pediatrician,

A-D-7, Devi Marg

Bani Park

Jaipur-302 016, India.

Phone: 91-141-2314774

Email: dryashpaul2003@yahoo.com

Abstract

Polio eradication is a national program in India. The Government of India through the Health Department along with the Health Departments from all the states of the country and UNICEF, supported by Rotary International and the Indian Academy of Pediatrics is conducting AFP surveillance and providing Oral Polio Vaccination (OPV). Millions of Indians are involved in this program.

OPV has successfully eradicated polio from many parts of the world, but, it has failed to eradicate polio from India, though the deadline for polio eradication was extended from 2000 to 2002. The vaccine has failed to provide protection to many children who have developed paralytic polio even after taking ten or more doses of OPV. In some children OPV has caused paralysis--vaccine associated paralytic polio (VAPP). The number of children developing polio due to vaccine is unacceptably high. As inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) is not available, even immunocompromised children are being administered OPV, adding to the high number of VAPP cases. Because of non-availability of IPV and poor potency OPV, polio cases will continue to occur and polio will not be eradicated from India.

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