



December 9th 2014

Polio Genomics Study

Dear Polio survivor,

Polio was an enormous threat to many all over the world. It is estimated that there are about 10 to 20 million polio survivors worldwide. Although vaccination fortunately eliminated polio in North America, polio is still spreading in some parts of the world.

An unanswered question is why some people developed complications, such as paralysis, while others did not. Most people who were infected did not develop paralysis. It is possible that there is a genetic predisposition to developing polio, that is, some people may have a variation in their genes that led to complications when they were infected with the polio virus.

Our research team at McMaster University is conducting a study to find out whether there was a genetic susceptibility that led some people to develop paralysis following infection with the polio virus. If you are a polio survivor you may be interested in taking part in this study. This would mean completing a questionnaire and sending us a saliva sample. Participating would help us to gain important knowledge and understanding about why some people developed paralysis and others did not and how the immune system may have responded to the polio virus. The information could help the development of therapies for polio and related viruses which continue to pose a threat to vulnerable people worldwide.

We started our study in Canada working with the March of Dimes Canada and expanded to include Polio survivors in the United States. As of December 9th, 2014 we have enrolled about 1,161 people. We are now hoping to enroll participants from international sites including all European countries, Australia and New Zealand and continue to welcome Canadian and American participants as well.

If you are possibly interested in participating please contact McMaster University at 1.888. 541. 2821 or email polio@mcmaster.ca for more information.

Sincerely,

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