

# What is Polio? Essay

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Polio is a highly contagious disease that is spread from person to person by contact with infected secretions from nose, mouth or infected feces. The virus enters the host through the mouth and replicates in the intestine affecting mostly children under the age of five, especially those who are not toilet-trained (WHO, 2013). Poliovirus is composed of an RNA genome with about 7500 nucleotides and a protein capsid. It infects human cells by binding to CD155 receptor (the poliovirus receptor (PVR)) on the cell surface. The virus attaches to the host cell and creates a pore in plasma membrane through which RNA is injected or the virus is ingested by the cell through endocytosis. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statistics shows that approximately 72% of persons infected with polio will have no symptoms and about 24% of infected persons have minor symptoms, such as fever, fatigue, nausea, headache, flu-like symptoms, stiffness in the neck and back, and pain in the limbs. Less than 1% of polio cases result in permanent paralysis of the limbs (usually lower limbs) and die when the paralysis strikes the respiratory muscles (CDC ,2014). In 1789 in England, Michael Underwood was the first one to provide a clinical description of the disease as debility of the lower extremities in children. The first outbreaks were reported in the 19th century in Europe and in 1843 in the United States, reaching its endemic peak in the United States in 1952, with more than 45,000 paralytic cases. There is no drug or treatment for polio. During the epidemic years

of 1950s, patients with serious breathing problems were placed in an "iron lung," a cylindrical chamber that surrounded a patient's body from the neck down, which used rhythmic al...

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...r public and endemic health issue, people will be able to access polio vaccines globally, and children would not be vulnerable to suffer from a painful lifelong polio-paralysis. ( WHO, 2013).

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