

Polio True Story—Kamran

Kamran, Islamabad, 2007:

Taken from TV Series Polio True Stories by Sharpcut Productions

As youngsters from I-10/1 in Islamabad gather in the street to play cricket, one is seen different from the others—and he knows that he is.

Kamran Khan was year and a half when was diagnosed with polio. Initially, when he was very young, he didn't understand why he couldn't play like other children, but as he grew older, he began to understand what it meant to have polio. Now as a teenager, he is experiencing a very different life to others around him.

“When I see my siblings running and playing— it hurts a lot because I know I cant. Now I have realized that I am not like them.”

While Kamran's friends don't treat him like he is disabled, Kamran knows that he is different. As they play in the street outside Kamran's home he enjoys having his friends chase him, as he pushes his wheelchair with the power of his arms winning the race as his friends run behind him.

With polio having affected both his lower limbs, any movement outside the house is on his wheelchair. While this is a great benefit for Kamran and makes getting out much easier, it still doesn't enable him to play cricket with his friends and siblings. Unlike his friends, he can only catch the ball if hit in his direction, and only bowl the ball underarm. He cant run after the ball like others, and so spends much of the game watching from his wheelchair, waiting for the ball to be hit in his direction.



Inside his home, movement for Kamran is not any easier, as not all rooms are wheelchair accessible. This means getting off his wheelchair. Here Kamran faces even more problems, as he drags himself across the floor of his bedroom. “Going to the washroom is even more problematic” his admits.

The biggest fear for Kamran's father is that after he is gone, who will be there to help Kamran through his life and support him.

“It was the worst day of my life, when I was told that Kamran had polio—due to our irresponsibility, our son has to suffer” says his father. “We as his parents can do nothing now, but we forever feel the guilt.”

“I would love to have been a pilot” says Kamran amidst a deep sigh, realizing that this is one dream that would never be possible for him to achieve. Polio has no cure, and Kamran and his family have to live with that realization for the rest of their lives.

“What we are feeling now is inexpressible” explains Kamran's father to Tauseeq Haider from SharpCut Films. Holding back the tears Kamran explains that he knows his mother still weeps when she sees him crawling and it breaks his heart to see that. He only wishes that things could change, but he holds back his emotions as he knows that nothing can.

Overcome with emotion Kamran's father feels that “the greatest injustice by any parent, would be not to fully immunize their children. ” Now that polio teams go door-to-door to give polio drops to those under five it is the “biggest tragedy for parents to miss out on this.”

Kamran's story is just one in the series of polio true stories produced and directed by Sharpcut Films.