

Polio True Story—Mujahid Ali

Mujahid Ali: Lahore, March 2007 *Taken from Polio True Story TV Series by Sharp Cut Films*

Born in 2003, Mujahid Ali was four months old when he contracted polio. His vaccination card reads a sad story—no polio drops were given to Mujahid Ali at birth. In 2003, polio campaigns were not as frequent as they are today, and so Mujahid Ali did not get any doses from polio teams going to-door as there was no campaign between the time he was born and the time he contracted polio. It is because of children like Mujahid Ali that one can understand why polio campaigns are held so frequently in Pakistan—to ensure that every child is reached in every campaign.

Mujahid Ali is the son of a champion Kabaddi player, who, just like any other father, dreamt of his son following in his footsteps. Mujahid Ali seems to have the same passion as his father towards this sport, and often accompanies him to watch the game. When they arrive home, Mujahid Ali tries to play Kabaddi, mimicking the maneuvers he saw, but he cant—and he falls. “If only God had made him healthy,” expresses his father to Tauseeq Haider, “at least I could have seen him playing Kabaddi,” as it becomes apparent that he has the same skill as his father towards the game, but yet will never be able to use that.



It is a sad tale to tell, when children fall unwell to a disease that is preventable. To make sure this doesn't happen, every child needs to visit the health centre five times before their first birthday, to ensure they are protected from all seven vaccine preventable diseases, including measles. To be protected against polio, it is vital that all children receive polio drops at birth and with routine immunization, but also when ever there is a polio campaign, and when the teams visit house-to-house.

There is no reason for any child under the age of five not to be given polio drops during a polio campaign—no child should be missed. Children who may be unwell with a fever or diarrhea still need to be given these polio drops to protect them against this crippling disease. Immunizing the youngest children is the most important, as these are the children that are most dependent on adults—older children can walk to vaccination teams themselves, the youngest need to be carried.



Mujahid Ali's father expresses his helplessness to Tauseeq Haider, but know that others need not face the same trauma that he and his family are having to go through.

Mujahid Ali's father realizes that this was the biggest mistake of their lives—not ensuring that their child was protected against polio. As his mother opens up to Tauseeq Haider from Sharp Cut Films, one can appreciate just how special of a child Mujahid Ali is—not only is he the youngest, but also the most loved.

“What has happened to my child has already happened—but it is not too late for yours,” speaks Mujahid Ali's father, and he requests all families to ensure that all children under the age of five receive polio drops in each and every campaign. “I pray that no other family has to go through the same life that we have to” he adds.

Mujahid Ali's story is just one in the series of Polio True Stories produced and directed by Sharpcut Films.