

members a virologist, a neurologist, and a rehabilitation specialist, this committee initiates projects to assist in banishing polio worldwide by the year 2000.

One of the committee's projects was a conference which resulted in the publication of *Polio en de gevolgen*, a book which discusses medical topics of the acute phase including recovery, the eradication of the poliovirus, and the rehabilitation methods for the late effects of polio.

In 1988, we started up our post-polio support group of 50 members. In 1997, we numbered 650. The Netherlands has an estimated 13,000 polio survivors, many of whom have already been (or are likely to be) confronted with post-polio syndrome.

What are the aims of our post-polio support group?

TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON POST-POLIO SYNDROME TO MEMBERS AND SURVIVORS — This information covers the phenomenon of post-polio syndrome, the medical consequences, the importance of changing one's way of life, and referrals and references to neurologists and rehabilitation specialists. Information is given in a brochure, a post-polio newsletter, and during an annual meeting of members, where experts speak and where members meet and get to know each other. We have set up discussion groups all over the country.

TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON POST-POLIO SYNDROME TO THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY

— Even to this day polio survivors will meet with inadequate medical aid because some doctors do not take their problems seriously.

Prof. Dr. M. de Visser, a neurologist, and Dr. F. Nollet, a rehabilitation specialist, are favourable exceptions and serve as pioneers in the field of post-polio syndrome in The Netherlands. Together we are working at spreading information among doctors. They do so through publications and presentations for their colleagues. We urge our members to take medical information on their visits to physicians.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Polio and Post-polio in Italy

*Luisa Arnaboldi Maggioni,
Mapello, Italy*

I am the National President of the Don Carlo Gnocchi Former Student Association, a group of more than 40,000 disabled Italians, including poliomyelitic people, who have been treated and educated in eleven boarding schools in Italy.

Between 1954 and 1974, polio survivors were hospitalized during the acute phase. Afterwards, a priest named Don Gnocchi founded boarding schools which were in the vanguard at the time. In these schools we underwent physiotherapy, psychotherapy, and studied so we could actively take our place in society.



Luisa Arnaboldi Maggioni and her husband, Decimo Maggioni

We have only recently learned of post-polio syndrome and many of us are experiencing the symptoms. We immediately sought to find out what other countries were doing and to examine and introduce this issue in Italy.

We sent nearly one thousand questionnaires and about 50% have been returned. These questionnaires have only partially been reviewed by several Italian specialists who work with the Don Carlo Gnocchi Foundation. However, we are considering opening a screening center in one of the rehabilitation centers of the Foundation in order to address everyone's rehabilitation needs.

We aim to deal with this new phase with serenity and to take advantage of all the advanced scientific data at our disposal today. ■

Contact: Luisa Arnaboldi Maggioni, Associazione Ex Allievi Don Carlo Gnocchi, C.P. 36 - 24030 Mapello, Italy, or Antonia Fumagalli Grisi, S. Croce 567/C, 30135 Venezia (Venice), Italy.