informed techniques that have empirical support but also recommends using recreational drugs to create spiritual awareness, despite evidence that this can lead to poor psychological outcomes. It is informative that Harris, a committed atheist, joins this debate and comes down on the side of spirituality as a crucial concept to be empirically and philosophically constructed without first ring-fencing the debate.

The book is written by Thomas Abraham, a journalist, who delves into the politics behind why polio was chosen for eradication over the likes of measles and diphtheria, how the Salk and Sabin vaccines were developed (with some questionable ethics along the way), and how the Rotary Association came to be one of the biggest funders of polio vaccination globally.

After Franklin D Roosevelt was struck down by a paralytic illness in 1921 (thought to be polio at the time, but probably Guillian–Barré syndrome) and outbreaks swept across the US in the 1950s, Americans were on a mission to eradicate polio, erroneously assuming that the rest of the world felt the same way.

In 2019, there are a small number of polio cases each year, mainly in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nigeria, and the deadline for eradication is being pushed back each year. Abraham chronicles some of the reasons for this ongoing failure including targeted killings of polio vaccinators by the Taliban, loss of confidence after a plot by the CIA to use vaccines to find Osama Bin Laden, and myths about the vaccine being used to sterilise populations. Additionally, the live vaccine has been causing outbreaks, and the goal of eradication remains elusive.

This book will be of interest to GPs, especially those with an interest in global and public health. Just because a disease potentially can be eradicated, does it mean we should try? The answer is much more nuanced than one might expect.

**A WORLD FREE OF POLIO?**

Polio: the Odyssey of Eradication

Thomas Abraham


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Polio: the Odyssey of Eradication is a fascinating book providing an insight into how polio became the second disease (after smallpox) to be targeted for global eradication, and why, after a multi-billion dollar vaccination campaign spanning 31 years, polio still causes a small number of cases each year.

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