

# WORLD POLIO DAY SPECIAL OFFER

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## DANCING IN MY DREAMS

CONFRONTING THE SPECTRE OF POLIO

BY KERRY HIGHLEY

Across most of the world, an entire generation has lived free from the spectre of polio, but for fifty years during the twentieth century that fear was overwhelming. Polio became every parent's worst nightmare, and panic drove rational people to do bizarre things to protect their children. Survivors of the disease often found that they faced a world unfriendly to their disability.

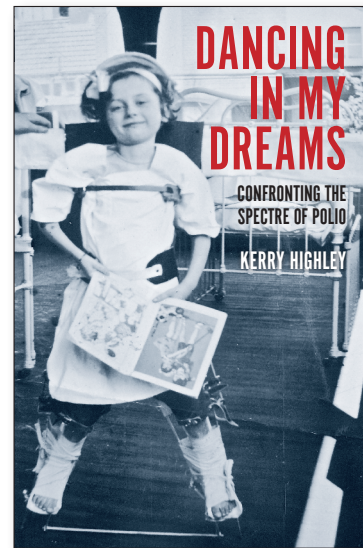
How to treat polio survivors generated a rift between the medical community and its recommendations and the approaches of those advocating alternative therapies for the paralysed body. In pre-Second World War Australia, two women symbolised this split. In her clinics in Australia, England, North America and Canada, Sister Elizabeth Kenny championed and practised a treatment diametrically opposed to the widely used 'orthodox' approach of Victorian Dr Jean Macnamara. In Australia, the public's reverence of the medical profession entrenched her approach until well after most Western countries had abandoned it.

*Dancing in My Dreams* details the disease of polio and its treatment; the scientific endeavour that led to the discovery of the poliovirus; and the studies in virology and immunology that culminated in the production of a polio vaccine. It highlights the experiences of patients and the voices of survivors, revealing how ethnicity, class, age and gender all mediated an individual's reaction to having polio, which included fear, rejection, denial and anger.

'Rotary International will not rest until all countries have been declared polio free.'

Sandra Pyke, (Past President, Rotary Club of Monash)

Polio is a disease that has no cure but is near eradication. Rotary International has been working since the 1980s to vaccinate children everywhere and rid the world of the virus.



"Kerry Highley's often harrowing account is thoroughly researched and well-written... Part medical history part social history, this book should find a broad readership among those who enjoy quality Australian nonfiction ... *Dancing in My Dreams* should be required reading for the anti-vaccination crowd."

Dave Martus, *Books+Publishing*,  
1 October 2015

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Kerry Highley** worked in medical laboratory science for many years before returning to University in 2000 to study history. In 2009 she received her PhD in the History of Medicine from the Australian National University for her thesis on the polio epidemics in Australia. While at the ANU, she tutored in Second World War studies and the History of Terrorism, and retired in 2011 to work on *Dancing in My Dreams*. Apart from polio, her research interests include the history of the Australian Army Medical Corps in the First World War.

To be launched by Monica Saville on 5 November at the National Library of Australia.

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