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\$25,000 Grant Awarded to Study Effects of Aging on Polio Survivors

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI – The GINI Research Fund has awarded its second grant to a team of researchers from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Michigan who will conduct a nationwide study of the effects of aging on the lives of polio survivors comparing the problems of men and women. The \$25,000 award, funded by GINI's Post-Poliomyelitis Research Grant, is for work to be completed in 2003.

The study, entitled "**Women with Polio: Menopause, Late Effects, Quality of Life, and Psychological Well Being,**" will examine the menopausal experience of women polio survivors, including the use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT). It will also include an extensive study of aspects of the polio survivor's current health. To distinguish the impact of menopause for women with polio, men with a history of polio will serve as a control group.

GINI Board President, Frederick M. Maynard, MD, comments, "This study is even more relevant in light of the Women's Health Initiative findings published this summer in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA, 2002: 288 (3): 321-33). Women taking combined estrogen-progestin therapy were found to be more at risk for invasive breast cancer, stroke, and coronary heart disease. It is possible that women with disabilities, because of their limited mobility, may be at a higher risk for problems when taking HRT. However, very few studies have addressed the particular risks of women with disabilities."

Claire Z. Kalpakjian, PhD, Project Manager and Co-Investigator, adds, "Using men as controls will help clarify the findings by using them as an age-matched comparison group. It will also allow for an in-depth exploration of differences between women and men in terms of late effects of polio and other health problems." Joan L. Headley, Executive Director of GINI, explains, "The balance of men and women subjects in this study is important since most polio studies typically report on a greater number of females. Understanding the differences in the experiences of men and women can help identify the best treatment and management approaches for both men and women."

Members of the research team include Dr. Kalpakjian, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation; Denise G. Tate, PhD, Professor, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Principal Investigator; and Elisabeth H. Quint, MD, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Co-Investigator. Polio survivor and advocate Sunny Roller, MS, will serve as a consultant on the project, assisting with the survivor perspective and information dissemination. All are at the University of Michigan.

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Launched in 1995 with a bequest from polio survivor and investment advisor Thomas Wallace Rogers, The GINI Research Fund supports the work of researchers and clinicians investigating the late effects of poliomyelitis or neuromuscular respiratory disease. Sustained by the donations of polio survivors, their families and friends, and health professionals from across the United States, the Fund administers two grants: The Thomas Wallace Rogers Memorial Respiratory Research Grant, to study the cause and treatment of neuromuscular respiratory insufficiency and the effects of long-term mechanical ventilation; and The Post-Poliomyelitis Research Grant, to study the cause(s), treatment, and management of the late effects of polio. Grants are awarded based on a competitive review of proposals by a panel of research experts, health care professionals, and persons with disabilities.