

Residential Care.

Provision will increasingly be needed for those unable to live in their own homes: both young children for whom no foster home can be found and those who leave special schools and need purpose built factories with some nursing care.

Vocational Training.

Many of those with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus are quite capable of earning a living but to do so in our highly competitive society many will need special training and employment opportunity.

Co-operation

The Association is grateful for what some voluntary organisations are already doing and intends to collaborate with these bodies wherever possible, not seeking to supplant or duplicate their work but to generate publicity and greater resources so that no one is forgotten.



Two young people who are facing the future with confidence.

Our Association

for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Ltd. (ASBAH) sprang out of various local groups of parents and was incorporated in 1966. It is a registered charity, No. 249338. In over 100 local groups, parents can meet others with similar problems and learn how to cope with their children's needs. They benefit from talks by doctors, teachers, physiotherapist, etc. The Association seeks to tackle the problems on a national scale and to raise money needed to implement the schemes outlined.

How can you help?

Most important is understanding. Voluntary help for children and their parents is of great value as is the support of local associations from those with professional experience. Assistance with fund raising events is always welcome. If you could help in any of these ways, please let us know—the address of your nearest groups will be given on request. Money is urgently needed for welfare, development and research.

Donations

Please make cheques, etc., payable to 'Spina Bifida Trust' and send to:—



Spina Bifida Trust,
112 City Road,
London E.C.1.
Telephone: 01-253 2735

No surgeon can transplant a spine



but we can build his life ... with your help

Dear Friends,

In 1969 I had the privilege of making a television appeal on behalf of children born with Spina Bifida or Hydrocephalus and I was overwhelmed with the warm and generous response. Much has been done with this money to help the children and bring advice, support and comfort to the parents, as well as continuing research into treatment and causes.

Please don't forget these children. They badly need any financial help you can offer however small, and I shall be eternally grateful for your continued concern on their behalf.



Sincerely,

Wendy Craig

Following the generous support received last year, including the Wendy Craig Appeal, it has been possible to extend Welfare Services, support a scheme for pre-school play groups, assist with the foundation of a full time centre in the Liverpool area and facilitate holiday provision in the West Country

At the present time there are two research projects into aspects of Hydrocephalus in progress, the aptitudes of children with Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus are being tested and the result assessed and assistance is being given to to work on causes of the conditions.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR SPINA BIFIDA AND HYDROCEPHALUS

exists to support and help those born with these conditions, and their families both nationally and through local groups by endeavouring to ensure that the best facilities and opportunities are available at all stages of their development and by sponsoring research into treatment causes and social aspects.

What is Spina Bifida?

Spina Bifida, literally split spine, is the commonest abnormality with which a child may be born—one child every four hours in the U.K. alone. It arises in the very early stages of development, probably even before the mother knows she is going to have a baby; its causes are not yet known and it can happen to anyone.

The Spine does not join as it should so the spinal cord is exposed. If it is left like this it is liable to damage and infection, so in most cases now as soon as possible after birth the baby is operated on to close the spinal column. However because the spine has not developed normally the nerves have already suffered damage, resulting in varying degrees of paralysis usually below the waist and often associated hydrocephalus—commonly know as "water on the brain", though this also occurs independently in about 500 children a year.

You may wonder why it is not as well known as some other conditions. The answer is that it has only in the last 10—12 years been generally treatable so that now many of the children survive. It is estimated that over 10,000 children in Britain today have Spina Bifida and/or Hydrocephalus and the annual increase is about 1,000—one thousand more children every year for whose future action is needed now.

What is needed

Medical Care.

It is urgently necessary for present NHS facilities to be supplemented. There are today only a limited number of centres in England and Wales which are anything like adequately equipped to treat these patients. Some children have to travel scores of miles, at frequent intervals, to get treatment. There are growing waiting lists for orthopaedic and other operations. A few special long-term units have been built but more will be required as the number of survivors increases.

Education.

Many areas are without suitable educational facilities for spina bifida children. Some are fit enough to go to ordinary schools: others could if there were classrooms adapted to their needs. Many others, however, will need to spend all or part of their school career in special schools. Too little research has been done into the educational needs of multiple-handicap children.

Research.

As Spina bifida affects several parts of the body, surgical and medical research must be wide-ranging. The hunt for clues of the causes of the condition must be stepped up.

Welfare

Once their spina bifida child leaves hospital, most parents are much in need of help and guidance. Visits from trained social workers would help enormously and would be a source of reliable information for research purposes. A comprehensive information service for parents is needed, also a Samaritan fund to alleviate cases of financial hardship needs constantly replenishing.