Patenting The Sun: Polio And The Salk Vaccine

Jane S Smith

Editor’s Note: Despite the progress in polio and other diseases made possible by vaccines, today we are witnessing a resurgence of vaccine-preventable illnesses as nervous parents skip their children’s shots. Watch the PBS documentary Vaccines: Calling the Shots to find learn more. BIO is also a leading voice on the patent-ability of biotech inventions and other IP matters. Salk implied that the decision was a moral one, but Jane Smith, in her history of the Salk Vaccine, Patenting the Sun, notes that whether or not Salk himself believed what he said to Murrow, the idea of patenting the vaccine had been directly analyzed and the decision was made not to apply for a patent mainly because it would not result in one. Patenting The Sun book. Read 2 reviews from the world’s largest community for readers. For half a century the specter of polio stalked the nightmares of ... Discussing the famous interview of Jonas Salk by Edward R. Murrow briefly, but mostly concerned with the disease, the vaccine, and the March of Dimes. Title should read, “The History of Polio in the US.” Patenting the Sun is a remarkable work. The true story behind the headlines shows the unknown conflicts, personality clashes, and unpleasant realities of developing a polio vaccine. The book was published in 1990. Reading it now in 2018, one is reminded how much and how quickly our world has changed. Monkey kidneys were, apparently, necessary for making the vaccine. But do we realize how many monkeys were sacrificed to get there? Do we ever think about the real work of dealing with all these live animals? This begs the question. Considering the enormous work in bringing a polio vaccine to the public, could we make that happen now? Would we even let it happen? If we faced such a terrifying threat to our children, would we marshall the forces necessary to defeat it?
Polio vaccines are vaccines used to prevent poliomyelitis (polio). Two types are used: an inactivated poliovirus given by injection (IPV) and a weakened poliovirus given by mouth (OPV). The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends all children be fully vaccinated against polio. The two vaccines have eliminated polio from most of the world, and reduced the number of cases reported each year from an estimated 350,000 in 1988 to 33 in 2018.