

20/09/2018

After only 1 tablet, which my mother was given on the 36<sup>th</sup> day of pregnancy,(after the 45<sup>th</sup> day there is no effect on the foetus), my disability comprises;

- \*left arm considerably shorter & curved inwards, with only 4 fingers. No wrist rotation.
- \*right arm doesn't straighten, no wrist rotation with 4 ½ fingers
- \* neither hands have thumbs so, fingers used chopstick style.
- \*right hand has a degenerative arthritic cyst which is reducing any grip strength I have.
- \*shoulder & back take strain of using my upper body, causing chronic constant pain.
- \* teeth are cracked & broken from using instead of fingers, which have very little strength.
- \*unable to equalise pressure in my ears, &, thus suffered chronic ear infections throughout my youth. This resulted in major ear surgery when I was 17, & I am left with very little function in my middle ear & the result is profound deafness in my right ear.

With my chronic pain throughout my body I have to have regular Chiropractic sessions, Osteopathy, massage & dry needling, plus a cocktail of painkillers. This is all very expensive & I am unable to work full time because of pain & related fatigue & my ever decreasing mobility. I rely heavily on my husband, who gave his job up to care for me & my mother ( now deceased), with self care, dressing cooking & housework.

I am a professional French Horn player & am the only French horn player in the history of the ABC Young Performers competition to have reached the finals. I have played as soloist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Hobart Chamber Orchestra, & the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. I was even featured on the ABC's Sunday Afternoon programme where I performed several recital pieces. My playing took me to the former East Germany to further my study & then to West with a full scholarship. I have performed throughout Europe & Japan & have won Principal Horn positions here in Australia & in Germany, but because I play the instrument with the bell facing to the left (mirror image to 'normal' horn players), I have been unsuccessful in securing a full time position in an orchestra, even when I am the best player, & not earning a very nice full time salary, I have financially struggled hugely my whole adult life.

As an extremely competitive person, this lack of acceptance in employing me has been absolutely devastating, frustrating, has caused much trauma( I suffered a heart attack 2 years ago from stress) & sadness throughout my 'career', all because of a drug that the Australian Government allowed to be distributed without proper testing. Even when evidence was being presented that the drug Distaval/ Thalidomide was causing deformities, the Government was very slow to react & take the drug off the market.

My body is failing me & I am struggling to afford the necessary treatments to enable me to function. I am now having major problems in even holding my instrument due to intense shoulder pain...&, of course we are a group of people that are trying to get some ongoing assistance as we struggle day to day with major deformities that are only ever going to keep on deteriorating as we all age. We are all stressing majorly over our financial futures, & Governmental assistance alleviate a huge burden in our lives as we battle our way.