**Are you a ‘Thalidomide Baby’?**

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — US Thalidomide Survivors, a nonprofit organization based in St. Paul, Minnesota, is looking for people born between 1957 and 1963 with defects possibly caused by their mother taking thalidomide in the first trimester of pregnancy.

Thalidomide was a popular sleeping pill approved for use in Europe, Canada and many other countries. Although it has since been characterized as a “morning sickness drug,” thalidomide was originally prescribed for insomnia, nausea, tension and other conditions caused by anxiety.

In an age of accidental overdose deaths from barbiturate sleeping pills, thalidomide was found to induce sleep with no risk of overdose.

When news of the drug’s devastating effect on unborn babies broke around the world in November of 1961, thalidomide had not yet been approved for use in the United States. However, in July 1962, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) revealed that more than 1,200 American doctors had been “testing” the drug distributed as samples under the brand name Kevadon, since 1959. Still later, the FDA learned that another American drug company had distributed thalidomide to doctors for testing beginning in 1956.

When the FDA concluded its investigation on Sept. 22, 1964, they had received reports of 17 babies born in America with deformities caused by thalidomide. Three of the 17 mothers had gotten the drug from sources outside the United States.

Unfortunately, most of the children with birth defects caused by thalidomide were never found by the FDA. Many mothers were shamed into silence. Others were unaware that the sample medication had caused their child’s injuries. Many U.S. thalidomide survivors have only learned in the past decade the true cause of their birth defects.

U.S. Thalidomide Survivors began as a private Facebook group in June 2016. Today, it provides information and peer support for thalidomide survivors born or currently living in the United States. An annual gathering is held in rotating regions of the United States. Members may also participate in groups and events with thalidomide survivors from around the world.

**If you believe you or someone you know was born with defects caused by thalidomide, please email** [**info@usthalidomide.org**](mailto:info@usthalidomide.org) **or call 651-760-8961.**

For more information, please visit usthalidomide.org.