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Report



The Utility of Proximity-Based Herbicide Exposure Assessment in Epidemiologic Studies of Vietnam Veterans

Released: March 5, 2008

Type: Consensus Report

Topics: [Veterans Health](#), [Environmental Health](#)

Activity: [Making Best Use of the Agent Orange Exposure Reconstruction Model](#)

Board: [Board on Military and Veterans Health](#)

A lack of information about Vietnam veterans' level of exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides has been a fundamental challenge in past studies evaluating whether veterans' health problems might be linked to herbicide exposure during the war. A new Institute of Medicine report, *The Utility of Proximity-Based Herbicide Exposure Assessment in Epidemiologic Studies of Vietnam Veterans*, presents the conclusions and recommendations of a committee that was convened to provide guidance to the Department of Veterans Affairs about the best use of an exposure assessment model that was developed to address this problem.

The committee concluded that despite shortcomings in the model's current form and inherent limitations in its proximity-based approach, the model holds promise for supporting informative epidemiologic studies of herbicides and health among Vietnam veterans and should be used to conduct studies. The committee offers criteria that VA should draw on as a basis for developing a request for proposals, and recommends that VA work with other agencies to facilitate use of military records in the studies.
