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Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2014

Released: March 10, 2016

From 1962 to 1971, US military sprayed herbicides over Vietnam. Congress passed the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to address whether exposure to these herbicides contributed to long term health effects in Vietnam veterans. The legislation directed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to request the IOM to perform a comprehensive evaluation of scientific and medical information regarding possible health effects of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used in Vietnam or to TCDD and other chemicals in those herbicides. *Veterans and Agent Orange: Update 2014* is the tenth and last congressionally mandated biennial update. The current update presents this committee's review of peer-reviewed scientific reports relevant to this question that were published between October 1, 2012, and September 30, 2014, and its integration with the previously established evidence database.

Based on the entire body of evidence, the committee *Update 2014* changed the categories of association with exposure to the herbicides sprayed in Vietnam for three health effects. Bladder cancer and hypothyroidism were moved from "inadequate or insufficient" evidence of association up to "limited or suggestive" evidence of association, while the birth defect spina bifida in the offspring of Vietnam veterans was demoted from "limited/suggestive" down to "inadequate/insufficient." The committee clarified that Vietnam veterans with "Parkinson-like symptoms," but without a formal diagnosis of Parkinson disease, should be considered eligible under the presumption that Parkinson's disease and the veterans' service are connected. For this last volume in the *Veterans and Agent Orange* series of reports, the committee distilled "lessons learned" into recommendations for the continued monitoring of the health of Vietnam veterans. The committee also set up procedures that will ensure military personnel are followed from the time they are deployed in order to anticipate the possibility of increased risk of health problems that arise later in life and could be associated with the exposures experienced during their service.

- See more at: <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2016/Veterans-and-Agent-Orange-Update-2014.aspx#sthash.zDrtXDPb.dpuf>