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▶▶ June 2014 ◀◀

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Item ID Number

04966



Not Scanned

Author

Corporate Author

Report/Article Title Typescript: Veterans Administration Agent Orange Registry -- An Overview

Journal/Book Title

Year 0000

Month/Day

Color



Number of Images 0

Description Notes Also includes VA Form IO-9009 Agent Orange Registry Code Sheet.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

AGENT ORANGE REGISTRY -- AN OVERVIEW

History:

The Agent Orange Registry was initiated by the Veterans Administration in mid-1978 in response to concerns expressed by Vietnam veterans who were increasingly worried that they may have been exposed to chemical herbicides which might be causing a variety of ill effects. VA Circular 10-78-219, dated September 14, 1978, established the framework of the Registry.

The circular also created a card file to record each examined veteran's name and address. This component of the Registry has changed as experience has dictated. Initially, a special summary was created to contain selected information and was retained in the medical record. In 1979, the procedure was changed so that the summary was submitted to the VA Central Office for encoding. The coded data was then entered into a computerized data base.

A special Data Analysis Task Force was formed in June 1980 when it became obvious that the Registry's data input procedures needed improvement. The Task Force recommended a number of changes during 1981 and, in August 1982, Circular 10-82-154 ordered an updating of the names and addresses for the veterans listed in the Registry. This was followed by Circular 10-83-38 that completely revised the reporting process in order to improve the coding of demographic and medical information, thereby permitting easier data retrieval.

Registry records consist of two components: the medical record maintained at the VA Medical Center where the veteran was examined and a computerized extract from that record. The veteran's medical record includes the full medical history, physical examination, laboratory reports and other clinical findings. The computerized extract, better called the "register," includes the veteran's name, address, the examining medical center, some information about the veteran's military service, an estimate of herbicide exposure and elements of the findings at the time of the physical examination. The computerized register constitutes an index to this nationwide set of medical records. A copy of the currently used code sheet is attached.

Purpose

The principal purpose for which the Agent Orange Registry program was designed remains unchanged to the present time. It is a process which serves all veterans who are worried about the possible adverse health effects of their exposure to herbicides while serving in Vietnam. It provides the veteran an opportunity to receive a complete health evaluation and answers to questions concerning the current state of knowledge regarding the relationship between herbicide exposure and subsequent health problems.

Following completion of the examination the veteran is given the results of the physical exam and laboratory studies. This information is provided to the veteran by both a face-to-face discussion with a physician familiar with the health aspects of the Agent Orange issue as well as a follow-up letter summarizing the results of the examination.

The Registry serves an important second purpose in that it enables the VA to provide veterans current information as it develops regarding their concerns. In addition it would permit the VA to contact veterans for further testing in the event that continuing research efforts should make this action advisable. The Registry serves yet another purpose, namely, to provide a means of detecting clues or suggestions that specific health problems or unexpected health trends are showing up in this group of veterans. Such clues would then form the basis for the design and conduct of specific epidemiological studies.

Limitations

Because of the self-selected nature of the Registry participants, this group of veterans cannot, with any scientific validity be viewed as being representational of Vietnam veterans as a whole. Therefore the health-related information contained in the data base cannot be used directly as an epidemiological tool. The information can, however, be used to detect suggested health trends, as noted above, and can provide some descriptors as to the characteristics of the group itself. For example, it is possible to show the numbers in each branch of military service, the period(s) of service in Vietnam, the kinds of symptoms the veterans are experiencing and some of the results of the physical examinations. However, since participation in the Registry program is entirely voluntary, one cannot make statistically valid comparisons with other groups of veterans or non-veterans.

Summary

The Agent Orange Registry remains the most effective means of identifying concerned Vietnam veterans. Any eligible Vietnam veteran expressing a concern relating to exposure to

herbicides is encouraged to participate in the Registry, which includes a thorough medical examination. During the examination, the veteran is asked demographic and identifying information, military information including branch of service and dates of service in Vietnam, and how he perceives his exposure to Agent Orange. A complete past medical history is obtained and documented. The veteran is then provided a physical examination which includes several base-line laboratory studies. Additional tests/consultations may be ordered depending on the veteran's physical condition or past medical history.

As of December 31, 1983, the VA had completed 130,220 initial Agent Orange Registry examinations of which approximately 13,600 have utilized the new code sheet. In addition, 31,471 follow-up examinations have been performed.

AGENT ORANGE REGISTRY CODE SHEET

TT # 1	1. Use PTF Number Only	FACILITY NO.			SUFFIX		
		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)

PART I

The information the veteran supplies may be disclosed outside the VA to Federal, State and local government agencies and National Health Organizations to assist in the development of programs for research purposes and other uses as stated in the "Notice of Systems of VA Records" published in the Federal Register in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please print. Use only one letter or number per block. If possible use black ballpoint or felt-tip pen. Shaded areas for VA use only. (DO NOT USE BLUE INK)

2. LAST NAME (8-33)																							
3. FIRST NAME (34-48)						4. MIDDLE NAME (49-58)						6. TYPE (59)											
6. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (60-69) (60)				7. SERVICE SERIAL NUMBER (Begin at left. Leave unused blocks blank. If service number is unknown, enter "U.") (70-79)				8. DATE OF BIRTH (Complete all blanks)															
								MO. (80-81)		DAY(82-83)		YR (84-85)											
9. ADDRESS—Street Name and Apartment Number, If Applicable (86-111)																							
CITY OR TOWN (112-137)																							
COUNTY				STATE		ZIP CODE (139-142)		(143) (144) (145) (146)		COUNTY (147-149)		STATE (150-151)											
10. RACE/ETHNICITY (Enter one code at right)						152	11. MARITAL STATUS (Enter one code at right)						153										
1 = American Indian or Alaskan Native 2 = Asian or Pacific Islander							3 = Black, Not of Hispanic Origin 4 = White, Not of Hispanic Origin																
5 = Hispanic							1. Married 2. Divorced																
3. Single, Never Married							3. Separated 4. Widowed																
12. SEX (Enter one code at right)		154	13. CURRENT STATUS (Enter one code at right)				155	14. BRANCH OF SERVICE (If more than one, enter latest Vietnam Service)						156									
1 = Male 2 = Female			1 = Inpatient 2 = Outpatient					1 = Army 2 = Air Force 3 = Navy 4 = Marine Corps 5 = Coast Guard 6 = Other															
15. DID VETERAN HAVE MILITARY SERVICE IN VIETNAM? 1 = No 2 = Yes (If yes, list below the dates of veteran's last two periods of service in Vietnam.)												157											
A. LAST PERIOD		F R O M	MO(158-59)		YR(160-61)		T O	MO(162-63)		YR(164-65)		B. NEXT-TO- LAST PERIOD		F R O M	MO(166-67)		YR(168-69)		T O	MO(170-71)		YR(172-73)	
16. IN WHAT CORPS OR AREA DID VETERAN SERVE? (Enter one code at right)												174											
1 = I Corps 2 = II Corps 3 = III Corps 4 = IV Corps 5 = Sea Duty 6 = More than one 7 = Other (specify) 8 = Don't know																							
17. LIST MILITARY UNITS IN WHICH VETERAN SERVED PLEASE SPECIFY COMPLETE UNABBREVIATED TITLE. (Company, battalion, etc.)																							
18. ENTER THE DATES OF LAST TWO PERIODS OF SERVICE (Whether in Vietnam or not)																							
A. LAST PERIOD		F R O M	MO(175-76)		YR(177-78)		T O	MO(179-80)		YR(181-82)		B. NEXT-TO- LAST PERIOD		F R O M	MO(183-84)		YR(185-86)		T O	MO(187-88)		YR(189-90)	
19. VETERAN'S EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE: (Enter a number in each of the following blocks using these codes) 1 = Definitely yes 2 = Probably yes 3 = Not sure 4 = Definitely no																							
a. I was involved in handling or spraying Agent Orange.				191	b. I was not directly sprayed but was in a recently sprayed area.				192	c. I was exposed to herbicides other than Agent Orange.				193									
d. I was directly sprayed with Agent Orange.				194	e. I ate food or drink that could have been contaminated.				195														
20. ENTER ONE CODE AT THE RIGHT WHICH DESCRIBES HOW VETERAN'S HEALTH HAS GENERALLY BEEN												196											
1 = Very good 2 = Good 3 = All right 4 = Poor 5 = Very poor																							

PART II — To be completed by Examining Physician

21. DATE OF EXAM			22. VETERANS COMPLAINT(S) (MAS coders, enter ICD9-CM code at right)					203	204	205	206	207
								7	8			
MONTH	DAY	YEAR	a. _____ b. _____ c. _____					208	209	210	211	212
(197-198)	(199-200)	(201-202)						7	8			
								213	214	215	216	217
								7	8			

23. Does veteran attribute chief complaint to Agent Orange exposure? 1 = Yes 2 = No		218	25. Is there evidence of birth defects among veteran's children? 1 No 2 Yes, conceived after Vietnam Service 3 Yes, conceived before Vietnam Service 4 Yes, both before and after Vietnam Service		220	26. Diagnostic workup/consultation (use the following codes): 1 No workup. No consultation done. 2 Workup/consultation done. Diagnosis doubtful. 3 Workup/consultation done. Diagnosis established. 4 Workup/consultation done. No diagnosis.				a. Dermatology	221
24. Number of veteran's complaints? (Code 5 or more as "5")		219								b. Neurology	222
										c. Psychiatry	223
										d. Infertility/Genetic Problem	224

27. SPECIFY ANY ADDITIONAL WORKUPS/CONSULTATIONS PERFORMED WHICH WERE NOT LISTED IN ITEM 26.

28. LIST UP TO THREE DEFINITE DIAGNOSES (MAS coders enter ICD9-CM Codes at right)					(225)	(226)	(227)	(228)	(229)
a. _____					(230)	(231)	(232)	(233)	(234)
b. _____					(235)	(236)	(237)	(238)	(239)
c. _____									

29. EVIDENCE OF NEOPLASIA (Specify diagnosis) ENTER "1" FOR YES AND "2" FOR NO IN BLOCK 240.										(240)	(241)	(242)	(243)	(244)	(245)
30. If no disease is found, enter "1" in block at right, otherwise, leave blank.		246	31. Enter year of onset for each diagnosis listed above. If unknown, leave blank.			1ST DX	247	248	2ND DX	249	250	3RD DX	251	252	

32. DISPOSITION (Enter one code in each block) 1 = Yes 2 = No (Code item d separately according to instructions!)															
a. Exam completed		253	b. Hospitalized at the VAMC for further tests			254	c. Hospitalized at the VAMC for treatment					255			
d. Referred for VA outpatient care		256	If veteran was referred for VA outpatient care, indicate two digit code for the clinic at right. (See clinic codes listed on VAF 10-2875-1.)			(257)	(258)	(259)	(260)	(261)	(262)	(263)	(264)	(265)	(266)
e. Referred to private physician, non-VA clinic or non-VA hospital.		267	f. Biopsy			268	g. Specimens to be sent to AFIP					269			

33. REMARKS

34. NAME OF EXAMINER (Please print)	35. TITLE OF EXAMINER
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36. SIGNATURE OF EXAMINER