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## Memorandum

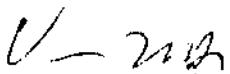
Date February 2, 1982

From Chair, Science Panel  
Agent Orange Working Group

Subject Science Panel Meeting Minutes

To Members, Science Panel

Attached are the minutes of the last Science Panel meeting. Please return your comments to me by February 16 so that I may finalize the comments.

  
Vernon N. Houk, M.D.

Attachment

## MINUTES OF THE SCIENCE PANEL

### AGENT ORANGE WORKING GROUP

The Science Panel met on January 27, 1982. A list of the attendees (Tab A) is appended.

#### Status of Fat Biopsies

The Chairman of the Fat Biopsy Subcommittee reported that the Subcommittee is developing a report to the Science Panel on fat biopsies for dioxins that will include information on (a) what is currently known and the current status, (b) when we would recommend it be done and under what circumstances, and (c) its limitations. It is anticipated that this report will be available within 6 weeks.

#### Protocol Review

The Science Panel completed its review of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) "A Case-Control Study of Lymphoma and Soft-Tissue Sarcoma: Association with Herbicide Exposures." It was agreed that the individual reviews will be returned to NCI. In general, the Science Panel was supportive of the proposal, and several agencies offered to help provide specific information. We further noted that this study should be complementary to the NIOSH proposed case control study on soft tissue sarcoma. The two studies are not exclusive of one another.

#### Veterans Administration Mortality Study

The Chairman of the Subcommittee reviewing the VA Mortality Study reported to the Science Panel. There was considerable discussion about the proposed study's ability to answer the question. Most but not all members feel that a proportional mortality study of all of the death certificates may be desired. Though the BIRLS tapes data are generally considered to be accurate and complete, there is question about the accuracy and completeness of the proposed Department of Defense (DOD) tapes that are going to be used for matching data. The Science Panel requested the subcommittee continue its work and report within 6 weeks on various options and resource requirements for each option to address this issue. The VA provided information (Tab B) on the numbers of individuals involved for the proposal as it was submitted.

#### Agent Orange Troop Exposure and Non-Exposure Cohort Selection Concept Paper

The DOD provided further details (Tab C). It is agreed that it is possible to develop cohorts of exposed and nonexposed units. It is anticipated that the Science Panel will recommend to the Agent Orange Working Group that a letter detailing the proposal and requesting that it be completed be sent from Secretary Schweiker to Secretary Weinberger.

In addition, a review of the disposal of herbicide waste and a trip report by the DOD assessing the herbicide usage in Vietnam were made available to the Science Panel (Tab D).

## Assessment of Agent Orange Health Hazards Among the Vietnam Population

Recent press reports of a group returning from Vietnam indicated that the Government of Vietnam would welcome assessment of the health risks in the Vietnam population by American scientists. There is concern about the status of the records and the availability of those records in Vietnam.

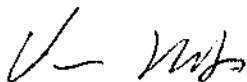
Dr. T. E. Woodward, VA distinguished physician, reported that he found the records to be useful. There was general agreement that a study would be difficult to do and difficult to interpret. The members of the Science Panel were asked to provide written comments to the Chair within 2 weeks. A consensus document will then be developed for transmission to the Agent Orange Working Group.

## Health Problems of U.S. Military Veterans and Possible Exposure to Phenoxy Acid Herbicides in Vietnam: Partial Coding and Statistical Analysis of the Citizen Soldier Health Questionnaire (CSHQ)

Dr. John Moore made available to the Science Panel the final report to the National Toxicology Program of the statistical analysis by Dr. James H. Dwyer and Mr. Robert Smith of the New York State University at Stony Brook (Tab E).

## Public Information

A member of the Science Panel expressed concern that the public does not have information available to counter some of the claims of adverse health effects which are not yet proven. There was general discussion of this topic. Most members feel that there is insufficient data to make firm statements on these issues at the moment. It was noted that the Scientific Panel under the direction of Dr. John Moore prepared such a document that was released at the public meeting of the Agent Orange Working Group held in September 1980. A copy of that document will be reviewed to determine if any additional information is available. The members of the Science Panel were asked to communicate their thoughts in writing to the Chair, and this will be discussed further.

  
Vernon N. Houk, M.D.  
Chair, Science Panel  
Agent Orange Working Group