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Author

Corporate Author Veterans Administration Advisory Committee

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FACT SHEET

Air Force Health Study
(Project Ranch Hand II)

Baseline Morbidity Study Results

Study results of Ranch Hand personnel versus a comparison group do not support a cause and effect relationship between herbicide exposure and adverse health in the Ranch Hand group.

General Health - Both groups in good health for age.

Cancer

- No soft tissue sarcoma found in Ranch Handers - one in comparison
- No difference in the occurrence of "systemic" cancer
- More verified skin cancer in Ranch Hand group - not adjusted for sun exposure which is major cause of skin cancer

Fertility/Reproductive

- All findings in this area are based on parental reporting in absence of medical records or birth/death certificates; hence, all fertility results must be considered preliminary until records verification completed.
- No significant Ranch Hand findings in sperm count or defective sperm; fertility or infertility; miscarriages; still births; live births; or severe or moderate birth defects in offspring
- More minor birth abnormalities (rashes, birth marks, skin discoloration, etc.) reported by Ranch Handers.

- Neonatal deaths were reported more frequently in Ranch Handers; misclassification between still birth, neonatal death and infant death very possible; review of medical records/death certificates pending.
- Significant associations were noted in both groups between maternal smoking during pregnancy and learning disabilities, physical handicaps, infant deaths and birth defects. Maternal alcohol use also associated with physical handicaps.

Liver

- No porphyria cutanea tarda was diagnosed.
- Ranch Handers self-reported more liver and PCT-like symptoms
- No difference in frequency of liver disease detected by physical examination or laboratory tests.
- Several minor lab test differences but none of clinical significance; most tests were similar between groups
- No difference in past occurrence of hepatitis, jaundice or cirrhosis
- More verified miscellaneous disorders in Ranch Handers; significance unknown

Neurology

- No significant differences in major areas. Borderline difference in Babinski reflex but no other relevant clinical findings.
- Profound effects of alcohol and diabetes detected

Cardiovascular

- No major cardiovascular findings noted

- Ranch Handers not developing heart diseases prematurely
- No significant differences in most clinical tests. There were significant differences in two specific peripheral leg pulses in Ranch Handers with no other clinical adverse findings. Pathogenesis and clinical relevance unclear at this time.

Psychology

- No difference in IQ and performance tests
- High school educated Ranch Handers self-reported more symptoms in the areas of fear, anger, anxiety, etc.--not assessed for differential reporting or Post Viet Nam Stress Syndrome

Dermatology

- No chloracne suggested from questionnaires
- No chloracne diagnosed from physical examinations or biopsies

Other

- No clinically significant differences in immunology, hematology, renal, pulmonary or endocrine areas. Some minor differences found but judged to be not clinically relevant.

Numerous medical findings, most of a minor or undetermined nature, that will require detailed follow-up.

Further physical examinations and questionnaires will be administered at the 3 (1985), 5, 10, 15 and 20 year points.