



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ARMED FORCES EPIDEMIOLOGICAL BOARD
5109 LEESBURG PIKE
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AFEB (15-1a) 00-6

11 July 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (HEALTH AFFAIRS)
THE SURGEON GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
THE SURGEON GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
THE SURGEON GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Armed Forces Epidemiology Board (AFEB) Recommendations Regarding Review of the Paper, "Antibodies to Squalene in Gulf War Syndrome by P. B. Asa, Y. Cao and R. F. Garry."

1. The AFEB was tasked by the Department of Defense (Health Affairs) to conduct an objective analysis of the above paper following a request by Congressman Jack Metcalf to Health Affairs.
2. A Special Subcommittee was formed to review the paper. Results of the review and the paper were distributed to the rest of the Board prior to the AFEB meeting. The Subcommittee's findings were presented to the whole Board at the AFEB Meeting held 28-29 February 2000 at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. After discussions and several additional reviews, the report was finalized.
3. The AFEB has thoroughly reviewed the paper by Dr. Asa and colleagues who describe a laboratory test they feel may identify individuals ill with "Gulf War Syndrome." The following is a summary of the findings:
 - a. THE RESEARCH REPORTED IN THIS PAPER DOES NOT SUPPORT THIS CLAIM.
 - b. THE PAPER CONTAINS NUMEROUS SHORTCOMINGS, SEVERAL OF THEM SERIOUS, THAT COMBINE TO INVALIDATE THE AUTHORS' CONCLUSIONS.
 - c. IT REMAINS UNCLEAR IF THE ASSAY ACTUALLY MEASURES ANTIBODIES TO SQUALENE, AS THE AUTHORS ASSERT; THE ASSAY MAY MEASURE SOMETHING ELSE OR THEIR FINDINGS MAY BE A NON-SPECIFIC CHEMICAL REACTION.

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4. The Board unanimously endorses and approves the above findings and the enclosed report. Details of their findings can be found in the enclosed report.

FOR THE ARMED FORCES EPIDEMIOLOGICAL BOARD:



F. MARC LAFORCE, M.D.
AFEB President



BENEDICT M. DINIEGA
Colonel, USA, MC
AFEB Executive Secretary

3 Encls

1. Report
2. Tasking Letter
3. CVs

Copies Furnished:

Board Members

DASG-ZH

OASD(HA)/HOP, Prog. Dir.,
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HEALTH AFFAIRS

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09 MAR 2000

MEMORANDUM FOR EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, ARMED FORCES EPIDEMIOLOGICAL
BOARD

SUBJECT: Objective Analysis of Article "Antibodies to Squalene in Gulf War Syndrome"

I request that the Armed Forces Epidemiological Board (AFEB) convene a subcommittee and review and provide OASD(HA) with an objective analysis of the attached article, "Antibodies to Squalene in Gulf War Syndrome" published in the February 2000 issue of *Experimental and Molecular Pathology*. Congressman Jack Metcalf requested this objective analysis. Congressman Metcalf would also like the curriculum vitas of the reviewers.

OASD(HA) will provide Congressman Metcalf with this critique and the curriculum vitas of the reviewers when complete. Please provide this review NLT 15 May 2000. To assist in this review, I have attached an extensive review of the work on squalene as a cause of illnesses among Gulf War veterans by the interagency Research Working Group of the Persian Gulf Veterans Coordinating Board prior to publication of the article and previous correspondence with Congressman Metcalf's office on this topic.

My point of contact is James R. Riddle, LtCol, USAF, BSC, (703) 681-1703, fax (703) 681-3655, or email james.riddle@ha.osd.mil.

John F. Mazzuchi, Ph.D.
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
Clinical and Program Policy

Attachments:
As Stated

