



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

VA's Charge to the Committee

Presentation for: NASEM Committee to Review Gulf War and Health
Volume 12, Respiratory Health Effects of Airborne hazards exposures in
the Southwest Asia Theater **of Operations**

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Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry (AHOBPR)

- Institute of Medicine Report (2011) – “Long-Term Consequences of Exposure to Burn Pits in Iraq and Afghanistan” pollutants of greatest concern may be particulate matter from regional sources
- AHOBPR Mandated by Public Law 112-260 (2013)
- VA launched AHOBPR June 2014; both Active Service Members & Veterans eligible to participate; seamless transition from military to Veteran status
 - Eligibility: deployment to the Southwest Asia theater of operations on or after August 2, 1990, or in Afghanistan or Djibouti on or after September 11, 2001
 - Two part program: (1) online self-reported exposure and medical history questionnaire and (2) optional medical evaluation
- National Academies (2017) – Assessment of the Department of Veterans Affairs Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry
- As of 3/21/2019 **172,286** registrants completed and submitted questionnaire; ~4.8% of registrants have completed medical evaluation



Airborne Exposures





Airborne Hazards Open Burn Pit Registry: Eligibility

- Veteran or Service Member who deployed:
 - Southwest Asia theater of operations at any time on or after August 1, 1990
- And/or
 - Afghanistan or Djibouti on or after September 11, 2001.





Charge to committee (slide 1/3)

- Prepare a report that comprehensively reviews, evaluates, and summarizes the available scientific and medical literature regarding the respiratory health effects of exposure to airborne hazards encountered during in theater service.



Charge to committee (slide 2/3) Specifics

- The report will pay particular attention to Hazards associated with burn pit exposures (Not forgetting other exposures.)
 - This report should be full scope of exposures for both acute and chronic respiratory outcomes.
 - Excess mortality, cancer, asthma, bronchitis, sinusitis constrictive bronchiolitis, and other respiratory outcomes that are of concern to Veterans
- Should pull in evidence from studies such as
 - Millennium Cohort Study
 - Study of Active Duty Military for Pulmonary Disease Related to Environmental Deployment Exposure (STAMPEDE)
 - National Health Study for a New Generation of U.S. Veterans, Comparative Health Assessment Interview (CHAI)
 - Pulmonary Health and Deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan Objective Study
 - Effects of Deployment Exposures on Cardiopulmonary and Autonomic Function
 - WRIISC/AHOBP COE studies
 - And others



Charge to committee (slide 3/3) : Deliverables

- Identify knowledge gaps
- Note research that could feasibly conducted to inform the field and provide answers
- Identify technology that can aide in these efforts
- Identify organizations that the VA could partner with to accomplish this work.



SUMMATION

- This issue is of great importance to Veterans, Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), the media, The Department of Veterans Affairs and Congress
- Thank you for serving on this NASEM committee.
- Questions?