

9/26/78

MINUTES OF THE VACO AD HOC STEERING COMMITTEE  
ON THE TOXIC EFFECTS OF HERBICIDES

September 8, 1978

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM.
2. VA Circular on Examination of Veterans Claiming Herbicide Toxicity: This Circular has been approved and given the following number, Circular 10-78-219 and RCS 11-49. The date of the Circular's issuance is September 14, 1978. With the anticipated delay in having the Circular printed, it is estimated that it may not reach the field before October.
3. Medical Advisory Committee: The Circular specifies that VACO will review the records of all patients examined in VA HCFs for herbicide toxicity. These records will be examined by a panel of physicians from the private sector, who will presumably provide an unbiased assessment of their content. Dr. Levinson will organize this panel.
4. Research Project on Dioxin Levels in Body Fat:
  - a. Dr. Hobson is completing the preparation of the protocol for this study. He will attempt to locate a Director for the study and to involve that person in the process of finalizing its protocol.
  - b. During the period when the study is in progress, the VAHCF will be proscribed from ordering dioxin fat levels without prior approval of VACO. Dr. LeGolván will coordinate the processing of these requests.
5. AFIP Toxic Herbicide Tissue Registry: The Circular informing the VAHCFs on how appropriate tissues are to be forwarded to the AFIP is being finalized by VACO Pathology Service. Dr. LeGolván will keep the Committee informed on its progress.
6. Central Herbicide Registry: Ms. Kilduff reported that the Washington DPC has agreed to handle the data processing aspects of this registry. The DPC will utilize encoded data sheets which are prepared according to the specifications provided by the Committee members. The DPC will generate monthly reports on all "active cases" included in the Registry.

7. Maps of the Areas Sprayed with Herbicides during the Vietnam War. Mr. Peckarsky's office has requested that the Office of Planning and Program Evaluation (07) obtain the official maps of the areas sprayed in Vietnam and the identity of the military units involved in the spraying. Presumably, these will be forthcoming in the near future.

8. Advisory Committee on the Toxic Effects of Herbicides.

a. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be on September 25.

b. At that time, it is anticipated that the answers to the Steering Committee's five questions on herbicides which were submitted to the advisors at their last meeting will be answered.

c. In addition, Dr. Schepers is requested to pursue the matter of having one of the other federal agencies undertake the necessary epidemiological study of "natural" disasters involving herbicides (e.g., Seveso, Italy and Nitro, West Virginia). The charge was described in detail in the minutes of the August 14th meeting.

9. Air Force Report on Review of the Literature on the Toxic Effect of Herbicides. This report has apparently not been issued as yet. Because of its importance to future VA activities, Dr. Schepers was requested to redouble his efforts to obtain the report.

10. Future Activities of the Advisory Committee (A/C).

a. Dr. Haber indicates to the group that several concerns had arisen regarding the operation of the A/C and its membership.

b. The operational problems concern the fact that the A/C cannot continue to operate with a membership that includes other than federal employees. The law requires that it obtain an "official charter" and that it "advertise" its meetings in the Federal Register. Mr. Fred Conway of General Counsel will assist in this effort.

c. While efforts continue to properly constitute the A/C, the representatives from the federal government will continue to meet as an ad hoc interagency group. Outside members will be invited to participate as "advisers," and members of the interested veteran's groups will be permitted to attend the A/C meetings as observers.

d. The next meeting of the A/C has been set for September 25.

1. The attached Appendix lists the specific assignments for the Steering Committee members.

2. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 Noon.

Respectfully submitted,

*Richard A. Levinson, M.D.*

RICHARD A. LEVINSON, M.D.

Atts.

Appendix A - Assignments

APPENDIX A

CURRENT ASSIGNMENTS: AD HOC STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE  
TOXIC EFFECTS OF HERBICIDES

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Individual(s) Responsible</u>
1. VA Circular on Herbicides (follow-up)	Dr. R. Levinson
2. Constitution of Medical Advisory Committee	Dr. R. Levinson
3. Protocol for Dioxin Fat Levels	Dr. L. Hobson
4. Circular on AFIP Tissue Registry	Dr. P. LeGolvan
5. Central Herbicide Registry	Ms. M. Kilduff
6. Maps of Herbicide Spraying Targets	Mr. J. Peckarsky
7. Obtaining Air Force Literature Review on Herbicides	Dr. G. Schepers
8. Reconstitution of the Advisory Committee	Dr. G. Schepers and Dr. W. Jacoby
9. Obtaining Answers to Steering Committee's Questions from Advisory Committee	Dr. G. Schepers