

# Report shows stronger link between Agent Orange exposure and some diseases

A newly released Institute of Medicine (IOM) report shows a heightened link between Agent Orange exposure and the development of bladder cancer and hypothyroidism.

The IOM committee revised the exposure connections from “inadequate or insufficient evidence” to “limited or suggestive evidence,” after reviewing reports on Korean War veterans who served in Vietnam and scrutinizing previously assembled evidence on these two conditions.

The report also notes that “there is no rational basis for an exclusion of those with Parkinson’s-like symptoms from the service-related category denoted as Parkinson’s disease.” This opens the door for VA to grant service-connected presumption to veterans exposed to Agent Orange who are diagnosed with Parkinsonism and Parkinson’s-like symptoms, in addition to Parkinson’s disease.

The 1,115-page Veterans and Agent Orange report is the 10th and final congressionally mandated update from IOM, which comprehensively evaluates scientific and medical information regarding potential health effects of exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the Vietnam War.

“The IOM findings are significant for veterans suffering from conditions potentially related to their military service,” said DAV Assistant National Legislative Director Shurhonda Love. “As a service officer, I recall numerous Vietnam veterans that dealt with diagnosed bladder cancer, hyperthyroidism, and Parkinson’s-like symptoms.”

The upgrade for bladder cancer and hypothyroidism as well as

the recommendation to include Parkinson's-like symptoms to the service-connected list could pave the way for thousands more Vietnam veterans to receive health care and disability compensation from the VA.