Item ID Number 05623 ☐ **Not Scanned**

Author

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Report/Article Title Minutes - Agent Orange Working Group (AOWG) Science Panel Meeting, March 15, 1984 with attached memorandum from Carl Keller, Chair Pro Tem, Science Panel to Edward N. Brandt, Jr., Chair Pro Tem, Agebt Orange Working Group (Cabinet Council) regarding Reports on the Association between Soft Tissue Sarcomas and Herbicide Exposure

Journal/Book Title

Year 1984

Month/Day

Color ☐

Number of Images 7

Description Notes Alvin L. Young filed these documents together with others in a folder labelled, "Agent Orange Working Group Science Panel, Current Folder." Two versions of minutes

Minutes of Science Panel Meeting - March 15, 1984

The Science Panel of the AOWG convened at 9:30 A.M. in Room 337-339A of the Hubert Humphrey Building. Members present were as listed on the attached attendance sheet.

All of the members liked the report on the review of international studies of the relationship between dioxin and soft tissue sarcoma prepared by Dr. Richard Hodder and his subcommittee. Dr. Houk objected to using the words "proved" or "disapproved" in the context of evaluating a causal relationsip based on epidemiological evidence alone. It was decided to substitute "established nor refuted" instead of "proved nor disapproved" at the end of the second paragraph of the report. With this change, the report was unanimously approved and will be submitted to the Chair of the AOWG for transmittal to Senator Cranston. A copy of the final submission, less attachments 1 and 2, are included as part of these minutes.

In reviewing the critique of the Baseline Mortality Study Results of the Air Force Project Ranch Hand II, it was pointed out that many of the concerns about the health of Ranch Handers raised by the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) are shared by the Air Force investigators and others as well. Most members of the Science Panel agreed that the Air Force investigators had been appropriately cautious with their interpretation and discussion of baseline results and that their conclusions were supported by the data presented. The VVA critique may have been engendered partly by discrepancies between the conclusions with in the report itself and statements made during the press release of the report. The Air Force investigators stated that they will reanalyze the mortality data periodically as more deaths become available and emphasized the preliminary nature of the Baseline Mortality Report. Some members noted that most of the items referred to in the VVA critique indicated that Ranch Handers were worse off than comparisons. Dr. Fingerhut suggested that this was to be expected if reviewers were not as sophisticated in epidemiology and biostatistics as the report was prepared for. The report itself includes a statement that it was written for persons with statistical and epidemiologic backgrounds. There was some discussion of the possibility of a de-technicalized version of the mortality and other complex study reports which could be prepared for the lay public.

All members agreed that a point-by-point comment to individual items in the VVA critique is not necessary. It was decided that we should emphasize the preliminary nature of the Baseline Results, acknowledge that the concerns raised are shared by everyone and that the Air Force intends to reanalyze periodically, point out that the highly technical presentation of findings may have given rise to an aleatory interpretation and recommend that some means for de-technicalization of complex reports of this subject be explored. A draft written review expressing these thoughts will be mailed within the next few days.

In anticipation of a request for us to review the recently released Baseline Morbidity Results of the Air Force Project Ranch Hand II, a procedure for making this review was discussed. Dr. Keller suggested that we each review one or more chapters in depth. Other members felt that this would produce a

too-lengthy and detailed review which was not warranted at this time. It was decided that all members would contribute a written review of the whole document according to the outline which is derivable from the Executive Summary. It was agreed that we would begin the process, but that we would not submit written reviews unless and until we were asked by the Chair of the AOWG. It should be completed in about 30 days and you will be notified of the Chair's request if and when it is transmitted to us.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m. Members are asked to offer corrections/ suggestions to these minutes to the Chair of the Science Panel as soon as possible..

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Washington, D.C. 20201

Science Panel

CABINET COUNCIL AGENT ORANGE WORKING GROUP MEETING

March 15, 1984

ATTENDEES

Carl Keller,.Chair	NIEHS/NIH/HHS	496-3511
Peter E.M. Beach	DUSIGA/HHS	245-6156
Edwin Weiss	OGC/HHS	245-1920
Vernon N. Houk	CDC/PHS/HHS	8-236-4111
Lawrence B. Hobson	VA/CO	389-5534
Lt. Col. Robert Capell	AF/SGES	767-5078
Richard Hodder	WRAIR	576-1418
Dick Christian	AOTF	653-1828
Stephen Mallinger	OSHA	523-7031
Miriam Davis	PHS	245-6301
Rob Lipnick	Dept. ARMY	653-1829
Jerome G. Bricker	OASD(HA),DoD	697-8973
Han K. Kang	VA/AOPO	389-5534
Marilyn Fingerhut	NIOSH	684-4481

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service
National Institutes of Health

Memorandum

Date March 23, 1984

From Carl Keller, Chair Pro Tem, Science Panel, AOWG

Subject Report of review of published reports on the association between soft tissue sarcoma and herbicide exposure

To Dr. Edward N. Brandt, Jr., Chair Pro Tem, Agent Orange Working Group (Cabinet Council)

1. The ad hoc subcommittee of the Science Panel appointed to address Senator Cranston's request that the Science Panel review "international studies" of an association between soft tissue sarcoma and exposure to dioxin met on February 23, 1984 at 9:00 in the Agent Orange Projects Office, VA, Washington, D.C. Members present were Dr. Richard Hodder, WRAIR; Dr. Peter Layde, CDC; Dr. Marilyn Fingerhut, NIOSH; and Dr. Han Kang, VA. Although the studies themselves were discussed, particular attention was given to reviews and comments about the studies made by others (see Appendix 1).

2. Two case-control studies in Sweden suggest an association between soft tissue sarcomas, a heterogenous class of malignancies, and exposure to phenoxy herbicides and chlorophenols. Although reasonably well designed, these studies have some limitation as do all epidemiologic studies. Specifically, in the Swedish studies the exposure evidence is based on retrospective inquiries and is, therefore, subject to bias. A number of studies have been reported since completion of the Swedish research (Appendix 2). Most did not show an association between herbicide exposure and soft tissue sarcoma. All, however, were limited by inadequate statistical power, imprecise exposure classification or insufficient period of observation following exposure (latency). Therefore, the subcommittee concludes that a casual relationship between exposure to herbicides and soft tissue sarcoma has been neither established nor refuted.

3. The consensus of the subcommittee is that the studies raise a valid concern and that there is a need for new facts from further epidemiologic studies of adequate size. Further indepth review of the previously reported studies will add no more evidence to resolve the question of casuality. Their main contribution was to raise the question that must now be reexamined by other groups in additional populations.

4. Results from the many ongoing studies by the NIOSH, NCI, VA and CDC should make a substantial contribution to resolving this issue.

5. The Science Panel of the Agent Orange Working Group reviewed and unanimously approved the above report at their March 15, 1984 meeting.

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Public Health Service
National Institutes of Health

Memorandum

Date

March 23, 1984

From

Carl Keller, Chair Pro Tem, Science Panel, AOWG

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To

Dr. Edward N. Brandt, Jr., Chair Pro Tem, Agent Orange Working Group (Cabinet Council)

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