

Vaccines linked to Gulf War health problems

Although American health care officials continue to deny the possibility, British researchers have concluded that vaccines given to soldiers during the Gulf War is a potential cause for their ill health.

British soldiers serving in the Gulf, like their American counterparts, were subjected to a vaccination program intended to protect them against tropical and other infectious diseases.

However, shortly after their return, many veterans began complaining of diverse health problems.

Matthew Hotopf and colleagues of the Gulf War Research Unit at Guy's, King's and St Thomas's School of Medicine, King's College, London presented the conclusions in an article for the May 20, 2000 *British Medical Journal*.

Their study involved 923 veterans who suffered from a variety of health problems such as fatigue, muscle pain and difficulty with concentration and memory.

The researchers found that the likely cause for the difficulties was the combination of vaccines service personnel received while deployed in the Gulf region.

As Dr. Hotopf explained at a news conference: "The key finding of this paper is that multiple vaccines received before going to the Gulf War are not associated with increased risk...but if you received multiple vaccines during deployment it does seem to increase risk quite steadily."

Veterans who received six or more vaccines against conditions such as hepatitis, polio and typhoid, as well as anthrax and plague, had the most health problems.

SOURCE: "Role of vaccinations as risk factors for ill health in veterans of the Gulf war: cross sectional study." *British Medical Journal*, May 20, 2000.

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