

## More bad news on Agent Orange

22-Nov-2006

**By Gabrielle Babbington**

PARENTAL exposure to Agent Orange almost doubles the risk of birth defects, a meta-analysis containing previously unavailable Vietnamese research suggests.

The pooled results of 22 observational studies, including 13 Vietnamese analyses, showed an almost doubled risk of birth defects associated with parental exposure to the dioxin.

Researchers said 50 million litres of Agent Orange were sprayed over South Vietnam by the US Air Force during the Vietnam War as part of Operation Ranch Hand.

But previous studies examining a link between the dioxin and birth defects had been inconsistent and the association was controversial, they said.

In the latest study of two million people, a sub-group analysis showed Vietnamese people who had been exposed to Agent Orange were three times more likely to have children with birth defects.

This compared to non-Vietnamese war veterans who had a 30% increased risk of having children with birth defects after exposure, researchers said.

"In the Vietnamese civilian studies, women and men were both exposed so that effects could be both teratogenic and mutagenic, whereas in the studies of North Vietnam and Ranch Hand veterans only mutagenesis was possible since the exposed were males," the authors said.

One of the authors, Professor Richard Taylor, head of international health at the University of Queensland, acknowledged some of the previously unavailable Vietnamese research had potential methodological problems.

However, he said the decision to include them was not politically motivated and it was unlikely the studies had introduced a bias to the final results.

But an accompanying editorial criticised the researchers' inclusive approach, saying although Agent Orange probably caused significant health effects, Vietnamese investigations linking congenital malformations to the dioxin were only suggestive.

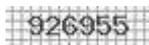
*International Journal of Epidemiology* 2006; 35:1220-30, 1230-31.

### Submit your feedback here:

**Full name:**  **Email address:**

Emailaddress is used for verification only, we will not publish it.

**Your comments:**

**Security Code:** 

▶

Please tick here if you do not want your comment to be considered for publication in the print edition



### Actions

Email to a friend/colleague  
Print this article

### Related Articles - Women's health - Pregnancy

- ▶ Safe drugs in pregnancy info needed (20/7/2009)
- ▶ Letter of the week (16/7/2009)
- ▶ Supplements still necessary (15/7/2009)
- ▶ Homebirths: nice idea in theory, but ... (14/7/2009)
- ▶ Good outcomes still likely despite low PAPP-A levels (8/7/2009)

### Patient Handouts for Women's health - Pregnancy

- ▶ Pre-pregnancy planning (12-Apr-2002)

### How to Treat articles for Women's health - Pregnancy

- ▶ Breastfeeding problems (21-Sep-2007) - Take Quiz
- ▶ Shared antenatal care (22-Jun-2007) - Take Quiz
- ▶ Gestational diabetes (11-Nov-2005) - Take Quiz
- ▶ Fertility in the over-35-year-old (8-Jul-2005) - Take Quiz
- ▶ Thyroid disorders (3-Feb-2005) - Take Quiz
- ▶ Preconception health care (18-Jun-2004) - Take Quiz
- ▶ Post-partum care (30-Apr-2004) - Take Quiz
- ▶ Infertility (12-Jul-2002)