

gulf war general medical examination dbq

Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ: Understanding Its Importance and Process

gulf war general medical examination dbq is a critical component in the evaluation of veterans who served during the Gulf War. For many veterans, this examination aids in establishing service connection for various medical conditions, ensuring they receive the benefits and care they deserve. If you're a veteran or a healthcare professional working with veterans, understanding the nuances of the Gulf War General Medical Examination Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) can make a significant difference in navigating the complexities of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims.

What Is the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ?

The Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ is a standardized form used by the Department of Veterans Affairs to assess the health status of veterans who served in the Gulf War. This form is part of the VA's broader disability evaluation process and helps medical examiners document symptoms, physical findings, and medical history that could be related to Gulf War service.

Unlike general medical evaluations, this DBQ focuses on conditions that are more prevalent or unique to Gulf War veterans, such as Gulf War Illness, chronic multisymptom illness, and other medically unexplained symptoms. It's designed to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the veteran's medical condition, helping to streamline the VA's decision-making process regarding disability compensation.

Why Is the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ Important?

Many Gulf War veterans suffer from symptoms that are difficult to diagnose or categorize, which can complicate the process of obtaining service-connected disability benefits. The DBQ serves multiple important roles:

- **Standardization:** It ensures consistency in how medical information is collected and reported across different VA examiners and medical facilities.

- **Comprehensive Documentation:** The form prompts detailed recording of symptoms, physical examination results, and relevant medical history specifically tailored to Gulf War exposures and health concerns.
- **Claims Efficiency:** A well-completed DBQ can speed up the claims process by providing the VA with clear evidence needed to make informed decisions.
- **Veteran Advocacy:** It supports the veteran's case by explicitly linking medical findings to Gulf War service, which can be crucial for service-connection determinations.

Key Components of the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ

Understanding what to expect during the DBQ can help veterans prepare and provide accurate information. The form typically covers a range of medical areas:

1. Medical History Related to Gulf War Service

Veterans are asked about their deployment locations, potential environmental exposures (such as chemical agents, oil well fires, or vaccines), and any symptoms they have experienced since service. This section helps establish a timeline and possible causative factors linked to service.

2. Review of Systems

The DBQ includes a detailed review of symptoms across various body systems—neurological, musculoskeletal, respiratory, gastrointestinal, and more. This thorough symptom review is vital since many Gulf War-related illnesses manifest as multisystem complaints.

3. Physical Examination Findings

Medical examiners perform a physical exam focusing on areas commonly affected in Gulf War veterans. This might include neurological testing, joint examinations, and assessments for fatigue, cognitive difficulties, or pain.

4. Diagnostic Testing and Results

If applicable, results from lab tests, imaging studies, or other diagnostic tools are documented. While the DBQ itself is primarily a clinical evaluation, supporting test results can strengthen the veteran's claim.

Tips for Veterans Preparing for the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ

Facing a medical examination can be stressful, but being prepared can make the process smoother and more effective.

- **Gather Medical Records:** Bring any prior medical documentation, especially records related to Gulf War service and symptoms experienced.
- **List Symptoms Carefully:** Write down all symptoms, even those that seem minor or unrelated. Many Gulf War illnesses involve subtle or intermittent symptoms.
- **Be Honest and Detailed:** Provide honest, thorough answers during the exam. Detailed descriptions help examiners understand the full impact of your conditions.
- **Ask Questions:** Don't hesitate to ask the examiner to clarify any part of the process or form that you don't understand.
- **Know Your Rights:** You can request a copy of the completed DBQ and use it to support your VA disability claim.

How the DBQ Fits Into the VA Disability Claims Process

The Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ is often requested by the VA as part of the disability claims process. Once completed, it becomes a critical piece of evidence supporting or refuting a claim for service-connected disability benefits.

Veterans who submit claims related to Gulf War service will typically undergo this examination if their initial medical evidence is insufficient or if the VA needs an updated or more detailed evaluation. The DBQ assists VA rating specialists in determining the severity of a condition and whether it is linked to Gulf War service.

Challenges and Considerations

Despite its importance, some veterans find the DBQ process challenging. Symptoms related to Gulf War Illness can be vague, fluctuating, and hard to quantify, which sometimes leads to under-recognition of disabilities. It's essential for veterans to advocate for thorough evaluations and, if needed, seek assistance from Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) or accredited representatives who specialize in Gulf War claims.

Additionally, medical examiners must be trained on Gulf War-specific issues to accurately recognize and document relevant health problems. The VA continues to update guidelines and examiner training to improve the quality and consistency of these evaluations.

Resources for Veterans Regarding the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ

Navigating the VA system and understanding the DBQ can be complex. Fortunately, several resources are available:

- **VA.gov:** The official VA website offers detailed information about Gulf War-related benefits and the DBQ process.
- **Veterans Service Organizations:** Groups like the VFW, American Legion, and Disabled American Veterans provide free assistance with claims and medical examinations.
- **VA Accredited Medical Examiners:** Using examiners familiar with Gulf War illnesses can improve the accuracy of the DBQ.
- **Online Forums and Support Groups:** Many Gulf War veterans share experiences and tips about the DBQ and claims process, offering peer support.

Understanding the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ is crucial for veterans seeking recognition and compensation for the health challenges they face. By preparing adequately, knowing what to expect, and utilizing available resources, veterans can navigate this important step with greater confidence and clarity.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a General Medical Examination (GME) in the context of Gulf War veterans?

A General Medical Examination (GME) for Gulf War veterans is a comprehensive health evaluation designed to identify any medical conditions or symptoms that may be related to service during the Gulf War. It typically includes a physical exam, medical history review, and relevant diagnostic tests.

Why is the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ important for veterans?

The Gulf War General Medical Examination Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) is important because it standardizes the documentation of a veteran's medical condition. This helps the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) assess service-connected disabilities accurately and expedites the claims process.

What conditions are commonly evaluated in the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ?

The DBQ commonly evaluates symptoms and conditions associated with Gulf War Illness, such as chronic fatigue, musculoskeletal pain, neurological symptoms, respiratory issues, and other unexplained medical problems reported by Gulf War veterans.

How does the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ support disability claims?

The DBQ provides detailed medical evidence that supports a veteran's claim for disability benefits by documenting the presence, severity, and possible service connection of medical conditions. This helps ensure veterans receive appropriate compensation for service-related health issues.

Where can veterans access the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ form?

Veterans can access the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ form on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website or through their VA healthcare provider. It is often completed by VA medical professionals during the examination process.

Additional Resources

Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ: A Critical Review and Analysis

gulf war general medical examination dbq serves as a pivotal document in the evaluation of veterans exposed to the Gulf War for disability claims and

medical assessments. This Disability Benefits Questionnaire (DBQ) is instrumental in standardizing the medical examinations conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), ensuring a comprehensive review of symptoms, diagnoses, and functional impairments related to Gulf War service. The DBQ facilitates the efficient processing of veterans' claims by providing a structured format for healthcare professionals to document pertinent medical findings and their nexus to service.

Understanding the significance of the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ requires an exploration of its context, purpose, and impact on veteran healthcare and benefits adjudication. This article delves into the intricacies of the DBQ, analyzing its structure, clinical relevance, and the broader implications for Gulf War veterans seeking recognition and support for their service-connected conditions.

The Role and Purpose of the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ

The Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ was developed amid growing awareness of the unique health challenges faced by veterans returning from the 1990-1991 Gulf War. Exposure to environmental hazards such as oil well fires, chemical agents, and vaccines administered during deployment raised concerns about long-term health effects, sometimes collectively referred to as Gulf War Illness (GWI).

This DBQ acts as a standardized tool used by VA examiners during Compensation and Pension (C&P) examinations. Its primary function is to document a veteran's current medical status, identify any disabilities related to Gulf War service, and provide detailed clinical data to support or refute claims for disability compensation. By streamlining the evaluation process, the DBQ reduces variability in medical examinations and enhances the accuracy and consistency of disability ratings.

Key Features of the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ

The DBQ is designed to capture a broad spectrum of health concerns commonly associated with Gulf War veterans. Key features typically include:

- **Comprehensive Symptom Assessment:** Detailed inquiry into symptoms such as fatigue, cognitive difficulties, musculoskeletal pain, respiratory complaints, and gastrointestinal issues.
- **Medical History Documentation:** Collection of pertinent medical history including prior diagnoses, treatments, and exposures relevant to Gulf

War service.

- **Physical Examination Findings:** Objective data from physical exams detailing neurological, cardiovascular, pulmonary, and musculoskeletal status.
- **Diagnostic Test Results:** Incorporation of laboratory, imaging, or neuropsychological test results to substantiate clinical findings.
- **Functional Impact Evaluation:** Assessment of how symptoms affect daily living activities and occupational capabilities.

These elements ensure that the DBQ captures both subjective complaints and objective evidence, providing a holistic view of the veteran's health.

Clinical and Administrative Implications

The Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ plays a crucial role at the intersection of clinical evaluation and benefits administration. Its use directly influences the accuracy of disability ratings and the timeliness of claim adjudication.

Enhancing Diagnostic Accuracy

Veterans exposed to Gulf War hazards often present with multisystem symptoms that can be elusive and challenging to diagnose. The structured format of the DBQ helps clinicians systematically assess relevant organ systems and symptom clusters, increasing the likelihood of identifying service-connected conditions.

Moreover, the DBQ's emphasis on linking symptoms to service exposure facilitates the establishment of a medical nexus, a critical component for successful disability claims. This nexus is particularly important for conditions like chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, or neurological impairments that may lack definitive diagnostic tests but are recognized as potentially related to Gulf War service.

Streamlining the Benefits Process

From the VA's administrative perspective, the DBQ expedites claim processing by providing consistent, thorough, and standardized medical documentation. This reduces the need for supplemental examinations, lowers processing times, and enhances the fairness of disability decisions.

Veterans benefit from this streamlined approach as it minimizes bureaucratic delays and improves transparency. They receive clear documentation of their conditions and an objective assessment of how their service has impacted their health.

Challenges and Considerations in the Use of Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ

While the DBQ is an essential tool, it is not without limitations. Several challenges influence its effectiveness in fully capturing the complexity of Gulf War-related health issues.

Complexity of Gulf War Illness Diagnosis

Gulf War Illness encompasses a constellation of symptoms without a single unifying pathology, making standardized assessments inherently difficult. The DBQ must balance comprehensive symptom inquiry with practical clinical constraints, sometimes leading to insufficient depth in certain areas such as neurocognitive testing or psychiatric evaluation.

Variability in Examiner Expertise

The quality of DBQ completion depends heavily on the examiner's familiarity with Gulf War exposures and related medical conditions. Inconsistent training or awareness can result in incomplete or inaccurate documentation, potentially impacting the fairness of disability determinations.

Veteran Reporting and Symptom Subjectivity

Many symptoms reported by Gulf War veterans are subjective and can fluctuate over time. The DBQ relies on both veteran self-report and clinician observation, making it vulnerable to variability in symptom reporting and interpretation. This necessitates careful clinical judgment and sometimes supplementary evidence to corroborate findings.

Comparative Insights: DBQ Versus Other Medical Examination Tools

Compared to traditional medical evaluations, the Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ offers distinct advantages in the context of veteran

disability claims:

- **Standardization:** Unlike unstructured exams, the DBQ ensures uniformity across different examiners and facilities.
- **Efficiency:** The form's design accelerates report generation and reduces administrative burden.
- **Specificity:** Tailored to Gulf War-related conditions, the DBQ addresses exposures and symptom patterns unique to this veteran cohort.

However, it may lack the flexibility of a comprehensive clinical assessment that addresses comorbidities unrelated to service. Therefore, the DBQ is best utilized as part of a broader clinical evaluation rather than as a standalone diagnostic instrument.

Technological Integration and Future Directions

Advancements in electronic health records (EHR) and digital DBQ platforms have improved data accuracy and accessibility. Integration with VA's Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) allows for seamless sharing of examination results, further expediting claims processing.

Future enhancements might include incorporating symptom tracking apps or wearable health technology data to provide dynamic insights into veteran health over time. Additionally, ongoing research into Gulf War Illness biomarkers could inform more objective diagnostic criteria integrated into DBQ protocols.

The Gulf War General Medical Examination DBQ remains a cornerstone in the assessment of Gulf War veterans' health, balancing the need for detailed clinical information with administrative efficiency. As understanding of Gulf War-related conditions evolves, so too will the tools designed to support veteran care and benefits adjudication.

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gulf war general medical examination dbq: Focusing on People United States. Congress. House. Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 2014

gulf war general medical examination dbq: *Gulf War and Health* Institute of Medicine, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Committee on Gulf War and Health: A Review of the Medical Literature Relative to the Gulf War Veterans' Health, 2006-12-20 In 1998, in response to the growing concerns that many returning Gulf War veterans began reporting numerous health problems that they believed to be associated with their service in the Persian Gulf, Congress passed two laws which directed the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into a contract with the National Academy of Sciences. They were tasked to review and evaluate the scientific and medical literature regarding associations between illness and exposure to toxic agents, environmental or wartime hazards, and preventive medicines or vaccines associated with Gulf War service. In addition, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences provided conclusions to these studies that were considered when making decisions about compensation to veterans. *Gulf War and Health Volume 4: Health Effects of Serving in the Gulf War* summarizes in one place the current status of health effects in veterans deployed to the Persian Gulf irrespective of exposure information. This book reviews, evaluates, and summarizes both peer-reviewed scientific and medical literature addressing the health status of Gulf War veterans.

gulf war general medical examination dbq: *Gulf War and Health* Institute of Medicine, Board on the Health of Select Populations, Committee on Gulf War and Health: Treatment for Chronic Multisymptom Illness, 2013-04-04 Chronic multisymptom illness (CMI) is a serious condition that imposes an enormous burden of suffering on our nation's veterans. Veterans who have CMI often have physical symptoms (such as fatigue, joint and muscle pain, and gastrointestinal symptoms) and cognitive symptoms (such as memory difficulties). For the purposes of this report, the committee defined CMI as the presence of a spectrum of chronic symptoms experienced for 6 months or longer in at least two of six categories-fatigue, mood, and cognition, musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, respiratory, and neurologic-that may overlap with but are not fully captured by known syndromes (such as CFS, fibromyalgia, and IBS) or other diagnoses. Despite considerable efforts by researchers in the United States and elsewhere, there is no consensus among physicians, researchers, and others as to the cause of CMI. There is a growing belief that no specific causal factor or agent will be identified. Many thousands of Gulf War veterans¹ who have CMI live with sometimes debilitating symptoms and seek an effective way to manage their symptoms. Estimates of the numbers of 1991 Gulf War veterans who have CMI range from 175,000 to 250,000 (about 25-35% of the 1991 Gulf War veteran population), and there is evidence that CMI in 1991 Gulf War veterans may not resolve over time. Preliminary data suggest that CMI is occurring in veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars as well. In addition to summarizing the available scientific and medical literature regarding the best treatments for chronic multisymptom illness among Gulf War veterans, *Gulf War and Health: Volume 9: Treatment for Chronic Multisymptom Illness* recommends how best to disseminate this information throughout the VA to improve the care and benefits provided to veterans, recommends additional scientific studies and research initiatives to resolve areas of continuing scientific uncertainty and recommends such legislative or administrative action as the IOM deems appropriate in light of the results of its review.

gulf war general medical examination dbq: *Chronic Multisymptom Illness in Gulf War Veterans* Institute of Medicine, Board on the Health of Select Populations, Committee on the Development of a Consensus Case Definition for Chronic Multisymptom Illness in 1990-1991 Gulf War Veterans, 2014-05-21 More than 2 decades have passed since the 1990-1991 conflict in the Persian Gulf. During the intervening years, many Gulf War veterans have experienced various unexplained symptoms that many associate with service in the gulf region, but no specific exposure has been definitively associated with symptoms. Numerous researchers have described the pattern of signs and symptoms found in deployed Gulf War veterans and noted that they report unexplained symptoms at higher rates than nondeployed veterans or veterans deployed elsewhere during the same period. Gulf War veterans have consistently shown a higher level of morbidity than the

nondeployed, in some cases with severe and debilitating consequences. However, efforts to define a unique illness or syndrome in Gulf War veterans have failed, as have attempts to develop a uniformly accepted case definition. *Chronic Multisymptom Illness in Gulf War Veterans* is a comprehensive review of the available scientific and medical literature regarding symptoms for chronic multisymptom illness (CMI) among the 1991 Gulf War Veterans. This report evaluates and summarizes the literature in an effort to identify appropriate terminology to use in referring to CMI in Gulf War Veterans. While the report does not recommend one specific case definition over another, *Chronic Multisymptom Illness in Gulf War Veterans* does recommend the consideration of two case definitions on the basis of their concordance with the evidence and their ability to identify specific symptoms commonly reported by Gulf War veterans. This report recommends that the Department of Veterans Affairs use the term Gulf War illness rather than CMI. The report recommends that the Department of Veterans Affairs, to the extent possible, systematically assess existing data to identify additional features of Gulf War illness, such as onset, duration, severity, frequency of symptoms, and exclusionary criteria to produce a more robust case definition.

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gulf war general medical examination dbq: Health Consequences of Service During the Persian Gulf War Institute of Medicine, Committee to Review the Health Consequences of Service During the Persian Gulf War, 1995-01-30 This initial volume in an ongoing study of the potential health consequences of service during the Persian Gulf War responds to a request from Congress to determine whether actions taken to evaluate health effects have been appropriate. It reflects the committee's examination of health outcomes and related research efforts, women's health and reproductive health issues, infrastructure and procedures for data collection, health services influences, the role of psychiatric diagnosis, and a review of the activities of boards and coordinating groups, as well as how issues stemming from involvement in the Persian Gulf might be relevant for possible future conflicts. While the committee continues its full-length study of the problem, the recommendations in this volume are for actions it feels should be taken immediately.

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gulf war general medical examination dbq: War and Health Harry Lee, Edgar Jones, 2007-06-13 *War and Health: Lessons from the Gulf War* summarises 14 years of scientific and medical research into 'Gulf War Syndrome'. It sets the record straight and promotes more informed dialogue between public, media, politicians and medicine. The book concludes that the syndrome has no causal basis and there is no specific Gulf-related illness. Based on published findings and the contributors' own clinical experience, the book explores both causality and outcomes. It describes the issues that have promulgated the concept of 'Gulf War Syndrome' and looks at the historical background to post-combat disorders, identifying common features and factors that shape their symptoms and the explanations attached to them. *War and Health: Lessons from the Gulf War* provides primary care doctors, hospital physicians and medical students with an up-to-date understanding of the scientific evidence and fills a significant gap in the medical and psychiatric literature.

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difficulty distinguishing enemy combatants from civilians, concerns about survival, caring for the badly injured, and witnessing the death of a person. Less traumatic but more pervasive stressors include anxiety about home life, such as loss of a job and income, impacts on relationships, and absence from family. The focus of this report, by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on Gulf War and Health: Physiologic, and Psychosocial Effects of Deployment-Related Stress, is the long-term effects of deployment-related stress. Gulf War and Health: Volume 6. Physiologic, and Psychosocial Effects of Development Related Stress evaluates the scientific literature regarding association between deployment-related stressors and health effects, and provides meaningful recommendations to remedy this problem.

gulf war general medical examination dbq: *Gulf War and Health* Institute of Medicine, Board on the Health of Select Populations, Committee on Gulf War and Health: Health Effects of Serving in the Gulf War, Update 2009, 2010-06-25 For the United States, the 1991 Persian Gulf War was a brief and successful military operation with few injuries and deaths. However, soon after returning from duty, a large number of veterans began reporting health problems they believed were associated with their service in the Gulf. At the request of Congress, the IOM is conducting an ongoing review of the evidence to determine veterans' long-term health problems and what might be causing those problems. The fourth volume in the series, released in 2006, summarizes the long-term health problems seen in Gulf War veterans. In 2008, the IOM began an update to look at existing health problems and identify possible new ones, considering evidence collected since the initial summary. In this report, the IOM determines that Gulf War service causes post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and that service is associated with multisymptom illness; gastrointestinal disorders such as irritable bowel syndrome; alcohol and other substance abuse; and anxiety disorders and other psychiatric disorders. To ensure that our veterans receive the best possible care, now and in the future, the government should continue to monitor their health and conduct research to identify the best treatments to assist Gulf War veterans still suffering from persistent, unexplained illnesses.

gulf war general medical examination dbq: *Gulf War and Health* Institute of Medicine, Board on Population Health and Public Health Practice, Committee on Gulf War and Health: Physiologic, Psychologic, and Psychosocial Effects of Deployment-Related Stress, 2008-03-25 The sixth in a series of congressionally mandated reports on Gulf War veterans' health, this volume evaluates the health effects associated with stress. Since the launch of Operation Desert Storm in 1991, there has been growing concern about the physical and psychological health of Gulf War and other veterans. In the late 1990s, Congress responded by asking the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to review and evaluate the scientific and medical literature regarding associations between illness and exposure to toxic agents, environmental or wartime hazards, and preventive medicines or vaccines in members of the armed forces who were exposed to such agents. Deployment to a war zone has a profound impact on the lives of troops and on their family members. There are a plethora of stressors associated with deployment, including constant vigilance against unexpected attack, difficulty distinguishing enemy combatants from civilians, concerns about survival, caring for the badly injured, and witnessing the death of a person. Less traumatic but more pervasive stressors include anxiety about home life, such as loss of a job and income, impacts on relationships, and absence from family. The focus of this report, by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee on Gulf War and Health: Physiologic, and Psychosocial Effects of Deployment-Related Stress, is the long-term effects of deployment-related stress. Gulf War and Health: Volume 6. Physiologic, and Psychosocial Effects of Development Related Stress evaluates the scientific literature regarding association between deployment-related stressors and health effects, and provides meaningful recommendations to remedy this problem.

gulf war general medical examination dbq: Measuring the Health of Persian Gulf Veterans Institute of Medicine, Committee on Measuring the Health of Persian Gulf Veterans, 1998-09-26

gulf war general medical examination dbq: **The Irritable Heart** Jeff Wheelwright, 2001 Wheelwright (former science editor for Life magazine) profiles five ailing Gulf War veterans from their deployment to the Gulf, through their experiences in the Gulf War, and their subsequent

illnesses and attempts to discover the causes. He argues that the illnesses belong in the company of chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and multiple chemical sensitivity. Pointing out precedents in military history that go back as far as a Civil War malady known as irritable heart, he argues that the illnesses are a combination of physical symptoms greatly magnified by psychological distress. Because modern medicine deals with the body and mind separately, he contends, the health investigation of the veteran's illnesses is bound to fail. Annotation copyrighted by Book News Inc., Portland, OR

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gulf war general medical examination dbq: Gulf War Illness Research United States. Congress. House. Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, 2009

gulf war general medical examination dbq: Gulf War Illnesses: Enhanced Monitoring of Clinical Progress and of Research Priorities Needed, 1997 Before turning to the results of our work in detail, let me briefly provide some background information and discuss the methodology we used for our study. During their deployment associated with the Persian Gulf War, many of the approximately 700,000 veterans of the Gulf War may have been exposed to a variety of potentially hazardous substances. These substances include compounds used to decontaminate equipment and protect it against chemical agents, fuel used as a sand suppressant in and around encampments, fuel oil used to burn human waste, fuel in shower water, leaded vehicle exhaust used to dry sleeping bags, depleted uranium, parasites, pesticides, drugs to protect against chemical warfare agents (such as pyridostigmine bromide), and smoke from oil-well fires. Moreover, DOD acknowledged in June 1996 that some veterans may have been exposed to the nerve agent sarin following the postwar demolition of Iraqi ammunition facilities. Many of these veterans have complained of a wide array of symptoms and disabling conditions since the end of the war in 1991. Some fear that they are suffering from chronic disabling conditions because of exposure to chemicals, pesticides, and other agents used during the war with known or suspected health effects. Accordingly, both DOD and VA established programs through which Gulf War veterans could receive medical examinations and diagnostic services. From 1992 to 1994, VA participants received a regular physical examination with basic laboratory tests. In 1994, VA established a standardized examination to obtain information about exposures and symptoms related to diseases endemic to the Gulf region and to order specific tests to detect the 'biochemical fingerprints' of certain diseases. If a diagnosis was not apparent, veterans could receive up to 22 additional tests and additional specialty consultations.

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