

INTRODUCTION:

September 17, 2001

GULF WAR RISK FACTOR REPORT REPRINTS

The National Research Council defines risk communication as an “interactive process of exchange of information and opinion among individuals, groups, and institutions; often involves multiple messages about the nature of risk or expressing concerns, opinions, or reactions to risk messages or to legal and institutional arrangements for risk management.”*

Risk factors are those characteristics that affects the probability that potential harm or undesirable consequences will be realized.

VA cares about Gulf War veterans. We have developed a comprehensive program to help them. This includes quantity medical care services, disability compensation, scientific research, and outreach and education.

We are aware that Gulf War veterans were exposed to a wide variety of environmental hazards and potential harmful substances during their service in Southwest Asia. The following reprints (with some minor modification) of articles from our *Gulf War Review* newsletter focus on many of the risk factors faced by Gulf War veterans. These include depleted uranium, pesticides, the anti-nerve gas pill pyridostigmine bromide, infectious diseases, chemical and biological warfare agents, and vaccinations (including anthrax and botulinum toxoid), and oil well free smoke and petroleum products. We recognize that there are other health risk factors encountered by Gulf War veterans. Some of these factors may be discussed in future newsletters and reprints.

*National Research Council. 1989. Improving Risk Communication. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.