



By email

Our ref: 10/08/lh/237

10 August 2015

Dear

Re: Nuclear test veterans

Thank you for your email of 10 August in which you asked for information Public Health England (PHE) held regarding nuclear test veterans. Your email has been handled as a request for information under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).

I have responded to your questions in the order you raised them below.

1. The number of nuclear test veterans whose NHS medical records are flagged for research purposes by PHE, formerly the Health Protection Agency and formerly the National Radiological Protection Board.

PHE (through predecessor organisations HPA and NRPB) flagged the records of 21,357 UK personnel from the RAF, the Army, the Royal Navy, AWE or UKAEA (UK Atomic Energy Authority) who had had potential for exposures to radiation as a result of involvement in the UK atmospheric nuclear weapon test programmes in Australia or the Christmas Island region between 1952 and 1967. The records were flagged in order to provide information necessary to conduct the epidemiological projects initiated in the early 1980s and reported in analysis reports in 1988, 1993, 2003 and in review papers in 2004.

2. The number of wives of nuclear test veterans whose medical records are flagged for research purposes

No wives' records have been flagged in relation to the Nuclear Weapons Test Participants Study (NWTPS) research.

3. The number of children of nuclear test veterans whose medical records are flagged for research purposes

No children's records have been flagged in relation to the Nuclear Weapons Test Participants Study (NWTPS) research.

4. The methods, scope and most recent findings of all such research.

The scope, methods and results of the NWTPS research have been published in scientifically respected peer-reviewed journals as well as in more detailed reports published by NRPB (National Radiological Protection Board). Two review papers were also published in 2004 and provide a summary of the work that had been undertaken.

The NRPB published a number of reports/papers in relation to epidemiological analyses of UK participants in the UK Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Tests and Experimental Programmes. Details of the key publications are shown below and these provide the full details of the scope, methods and most recent findings.

The most recent publications were completed in 2004 when 2 review papers describing the NRPB epidemiological studies and the results were published in the scientific journal, the *Journal of Radiological Protection*.

- Epidemiological studies of UK test veterans: I General Description. *Journal of Radiological Protection* **24** 199-217; Kendall G M, Muirhead C R, Darby S C, Doll R, Arnold L, O'Hagan J A. Abstract available at <http://iopscience.iop.org/0952-4746/24/3/001>
- Epidemiological studies of UK test veterans: II Mortality and cancer incidence. *Journal of Radiological Protection* **24** 219-241; Muirhead C R, Kendall G M, Darby S C, Doll R, Haylock R G E, O'Hagan J A, Berridge G L C, English M A, Hunter N. Abstract available at <http://iopscience.iop.org/0952-4746/24/3/002>

Since 1983, the NRPB (now HPA-CRCE) researchers have completed three full epidemiological analyses of the UK Participants in the UK Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Tests and Experimental Programmes. The first epidemiological analysis was completed in 1988 and described the findings based on follow-up to 1983. A subsequent analysis, reported in 1993, described findings based on follow-up to 1990 and a third analysis, which considered follow-up to the end of 1998, was published in 2003. Each of these analyses was reported in a full report published by NRPB and also in a shorter paper which was published in a scientific journal (and as such was reviewed by independent scientists before publication).

Analysis reports published in peer-reviewed journals

1st analysis (1988): A summary of mortality and incidence of cancer in men from the United Kingdom who participated in the United Kingdom's atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and experimental programmes. *British Medical Journal*, **296**, 332-338. Darby S C, Kendall G M, Fell T P, O'Hagan J A, Muirhead C R, Ennis J R, Ball A M, Dennis J A and Doll R.

2nd analysis (1993): Further follow-up of mortality and incidence of cancer in men from the United Kingdom who participated in the United Kingdom's atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and experimental programmes. *British Medical Journal*, **307**, 1530-1535. Darby S C, Kendall G M, Fell T P, Doll R, Goodill A A, Conquest A J, Jackson D A and Haylock R G E.

3rd analysis (2003): Follow up of mortality and incidence of cancer 1952-1998 in men from the UK who participated in the UK's atmospheric nuclear weapons tests and experimental programmes. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, **60**, 165-172. Muirhead C R, Bingham D, Haylock R G E, O'Hagan J A, Goodill A A, Berridge G L C, English M A, Hunter N and Kendall G M.

NRPB analysis reports

1st analysis (1988): Mortality and cancer incidence in UK participants in UK atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and experimental programmes. Chilton, [NRPB-R214](#) (London, HMSO). Darby S C, Kendall G M, Fell T P, O'Hagan J A, Muirhead C R, Ennis J R, Ball A M, Dennis J A and Doll R.

2nd analysis (1993): Mortality and cancer incidence 1952-1990 in UK participants in the UK atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and experimental programmes. Chilton, [NRPB-R266](#) (London, HMSO). Darby S C, Kendall G M, Fell T P, Doll R, Goodill A A, Conquest A J, Jackson D A and Haylock R G E. (1993b)

3rd analysis: Mortality and Cancer Incidence 1952-1998 in UK Participants in the UK Atmospheric Nuclear Weapons Tests and Experimental Programmes. Chilton, [NRPB-W27](#). Muirhead C R, Bingham D, Haylock R G E, O'Hagan J A, Goodill A A, Berridge G L C, English M A, Hunter N and Kendall G M.

Further information can also be found at

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140629102627/http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/Radiation/UnderstandingRadiation/UnderstandingRadiationTopics/RadiationEpidemiology/NuclearWeaponsTestParticipantsStudy/>

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer them to me in the first instance. Under Regulation 11 of the EIR you have the right to make representations to PHE in respect of this response. Requests for internal reviews should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of receipt of the response to your original request and should be addressed to the above address, alternatively contact us by email at: foi@phe.gov.uk

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office if a complaint cannot be resolved through the PHE complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted by writing to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Public Information Access officer