

Parasite Infections are Leading to Undiagnosed Health Problems for Veterans: Misdiagnosed, Undiagnosed and Untreated Special Attention to VA Hospital Administration

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In February 2017, I saw a 69 year old Vietnam veteran from Asheville, North Carolina with a high suspicion for parasite infection. He was told by his doctor that he has *Blastocystis hominis* and other undefined and unidentifiable parasites based on stool testing. The doctor didn't know what to do for these undefined parasites. The patient said he was a medical corpsman, U.S. Army Infantry in the jungle and exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

He began to have symptoms two years after returning home, around 1973, with extreme fatigue, abdominal discomfort and pain, diarrhea and constipation, anal itching, varicose veins up to his combat boots level in his legs, severe insomnia, hypertension, low testosterone, esophageal spasm, social interaction issues, eye problems, joint pain and periodontal disease.

Physical exam was unremarkable. Acupuncture Meridian Assessment (AMA, see my Articles page on my website) indicated 4 out of 40 meridians were out of balance. Liver, spleen and two allergy-immunology points at his left and right hands were out of balance. His liver meridian was balanced with Praziquantel, indicating he had been exposed to liver fluke. His spleen meridian was balanced with Tinidazole, indicating he may have microscopic protozoan parasites. Allergy-immunology points were balanced with Itraconazole and Fluconazole, indicating molds and yeast/candida problems.

He may or may not necessarily have been exposed to these fungi and parasites from the jungle in Vietnam. There is no proof where he got these infections. You do not have to leave Missouri, Iowa or Kansas to get parasites or fungus. I wrote many articles on these subjects including, [Operation Enduring Freedom: Saving Colonel H.](#), [Parasite Guy on UFO and FUO](#), and my book, [Accidental Cure](#). Patients usually respond to the anti-parasitic and anti-fungal medications. He will be on anti-parasitic meds for three weeks, followed by a three week course of anti-fungal meds, and may repeat this cycle 2-3 times.

He gave me an article written by Claudia Gary: [Toxic Hitchhikers, Parasites from War Zones](#). This article discussed parasites and diseases of Southeast Asia – most of which unknown to American physicians – which have long worried Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA).

Gary's article notes that veterans of all wars must contend with exotic parasites. Parasite infections are one focus of Tropical Medicine, an Infectious Disease subspecialty with a history intertwined with war and British colonization. Some of these infections - such as leishmaniasis, lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis and soil-contaminated helminth infections - are termed "neglected tropical diseases."

Two of the most devastating and lasting parasitic infections Vietnam veterans have suffered are those caused by mosquito-borne filarial worms and foodborne liver flukes (*Opisthorchis viverrini*). Liver fluke infection can go virtually undetected for decades and then cause a deadly cancer, cholangiocarcinoma.

According to the VA's Veterans Health Initiative, veterans who have returned from Iraq may be at risk of sand fly fever, malaria, amoebic dysentery, giardiasis and leishmaniasis. Those who have returned from Afghanistan are at risk of protozoan parasites, *Entamoeba histolytica* and *Giardia lamblia*, as well as soil-transmitted helminths.

Tom Berger, the executive director of VVA's Veterans Health Council, responded to Claudia Gary's article that one of the major health issues affecting people who have served in the U.S. military is parasites, primarily because parasitic infections are so commonly misdiagnosed.

Parasites can have a direct and profound effect on one's emotions and intellectual capacity. They can be the direct cause of depression, irritability, emotional swings, confusion, inability to concentrate, and restlessness. They have many indirect causes as well. Insomnia and broken sleep create fatigue that, in turn, affect most aspects of your life and can lead to difficulties in relationships and overall quality of life.

Tom Berger's final comment was that it is important to talk with your health care provider about your military service, particularly about where and when you served, and ask whether you should be screened for parasites.

At least he is acknowledging that parasites are common among veterans in the Vietnam War and other war zones as a leading undiagnosed health problem. The only problem is that the screening tests for parasites are not reliable, and they are often still misdiagnosed, undiagnosed and untreated.

After hearing Tom Berger's comments, and reading Claudia Gary's article, I realized I needed to actively reach out to veterans who are suffering from undiagnosed parasite related health problems. Parasite testing is not reliable and not treated properly at Veterans Hospitals. This is not unique to VA hospitals. Parasites are commonly hidden from standard diagnostic testing and waiting to come out when you are most vulnerable. I seek to reach out to VA hospital administration and Internal medicine/family physicians at VA hospitals, and train these physicians to detect and treat parasites based on Acupuncture Meridian Assessment.

Is it possible? Acupuncture Meridian Assessment is a new concept for most physicians. It is a "New Medicine based on New Biology." I hope this letter reaches VA hospital administrators and VA physicians. Parasites are engaging in an asymmetric warfare with our veterans even after many decades. I train physicians, MDs and DOs using Acupuncture Meridian Assessment (AMA) to detect parasites and how to treat them. More detailed information on AMA is available on the [Articles](#) page on my website. Also, review the [Special Training](#) page for medical professionals.

Dr. Simon Yu, M.D. is a Board Certified Internist. He practices Internal Medicine with an emphasis on Alternative Medicine to use the best each has to offer. For more articles and information about alternative medicine as well as patient success stories, and Dr. Yu's revolutionary health book [*Accidental Cure: Extraordinary Medicine for Extraordinary Patients*](#), visit his web site at PreventionAndHealing.com or call Prevention and Healing, Inc., 314-432-7802. You can also attend a free monthly presentation and discussion by Dr. Yu on Alternative Medicine at his office on the second Tuesday each month at 6:30 pm. Call to verify the date. Seating is limited, arrive early.



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