

epidemiological assessments including case series, correlational studies and studies with insufficient statistical power as well as key mechanistic and animal studies which are found to have particular relevance to an effect on human organ systems may also be considered.

(f) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (d) of this section, a *significant statistical association* may be deemed to exist between a particular exposure and a specific disease if, in the Secretary's judgment, scientific and medical evidence on the whole supports such a decision.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501; Pub. L. 98-542)

[54 FR 40391, Oct. 2, 1989; 54 FR 46187, Nov. 1, 1989]

§ 1.18 Guidelines for establishing presumptions of service connection for former prisoners of war.

(a) *Purpose.* The Secretary of Veterans Affairs will establish presumptions of service connection for former prisoners of war when necessary to prevent denials of benefits in significant numbers of meritorious claims.

(b) *Standard.* The Secretary may establish a presumption of service connection for a disease when the Secretary finds that there is at least limited/suggestive evidence that an increased risk of such disease is associated with service involving detention or internment as a prisoner of war and an association between such detention or internment and the disease is biologically plausible.

(1) *Definition.* The phrase "limited/suggestive evidence" refers to evidence of a sound scientific or medical nature that is reasonably suggestive of an association between prisoner-of-war experience and the disease, even though the evidence may be limited because matters such as chance, bias, and confounding could not be ruled out with confidence or because the relatively small size of the affected population restricts the data available for study.

(2) *Examples.* "Limited/suggestive evidence" may be found where one high-quality study detects a statistically significant association between the prisoner-of-war experience and disease, even though other studies may be inconclusive. It also may be satisfied

where several smaller studies detect an association that is consistent in magnitude and direction. These examples are not exhaustive.

(c) *Duration of detention or internment.* In establishing a presumption of service connection under paragraph (b) of this section, the Secretary may, based on sound scientific or medical evidence, specify a minimum duration of detention or internment necessary for application of the presumption.

(d) *Association.* The requirement in paragraph (b) of this section that an increased risk of disease be "associated" with prisoner-of-war service may be satisfied by evidence that demonstrates either a statistical association or a causal association.

(e) *Evidence.* In making determinations under paragraph (b) of this section, the Secretary will consider, to the extent feasible:

(1) Evidence regarding the increased incidence of disease in former prisoners of war;

(2) Evidence regarding the health effects of circumstances or hardships similar to those experienced by prisoners of war (such as malnutrition, torture, physical abuse, or psychological stress);

(3) Evidence regarding the duration of exposure to circumstances or hardships experienced by prisoners of war that is associated with particular health effects; and

(4) Any other sound scientific or medical evidence the Secretary considers relevant.

(f) *Evaluation of studies.* In evaluating any study for the purposes of this section, the Secretary will consider:

(1) The degree to which the study's findings are statistically significant;

(2) The degree to which any conclusions drawn from the study data have withstood peer review;

(3) Whether the methodology used to obtain the data can be replicated;

(4) The degree to which the data may be affected by chance, bias, or confounding factors; and

(5) The degree to which the data may be relevant to the experience of prisoners of war in view of similarities or differences in the circumstances of the study population.

§ 1.200

(g) *Contracts for Scientific Review and Analysis.* To assist in making determinations under this section, the Secretary may contract with an appropriate expert body to review and summarize the scientific evidence, and assess the strength thereof, concerning the association between detention or internment as a prisoner of war and the occurrence of any disease, or for any other purpose relevant to the Secretary's determinations.

(Authority:
38 U.S.C. 501(a), 1110)

[69 FR 60089, Oct. 7, 2004]

REFERRALS OF INFORMATION REGARDING CRIMINAL VIOLATIONS

§ 1.200 Purpose.

This subpart establishes a duty upon and sets forth the mechanism for VA employees to report information about actual or possible criminal violations to appropriate law enforcement entities.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. App. 3, 38 U.S.C. 902)

[68 FR 17550, Apr. 10, 2003]

§ 1.201 Employee's duty to report.

All VA employees with knowledge or information about actual or possible violations of criminal law related to VA programs, operations, facilities, contracts, or information technology systems shall immediately report such knowledge or information to their supervisor, any management official, or directly to the Office of Inspector General.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. App. 3, 38 U.S.C. 902)

[68 FR 17550, Apr. 10, 2003]

§ 1.203 Information to be reported to VA Police.

Information about actual or possible violations of criminal laws related to VA programs, operations, facilities, or involving VA employees, where the violation of criminal law occurs on VA premises, will be reported by VA management officials to the VA police component with responsibility for the VA station or facility in question. If there is no VA police component with jurisdiction over the offense, the information will be reported to Federal,

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state or local law enforcement officials, as appropriate.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 902)

[68 FR 17550, Apr. 10, 2003]

§ 1.204 Information to be reported to the Office of Inspector General.

Criminal matters involving felonies will also be immediately referred to the Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations. VA management officials with information about possible criminal matters involving felonies will ensure and be responsible for prompt referrals to the OIG. Examples of felonies include but are not limited to, theft of Government property over \$1000, false claims, false statements, drug offenses, crimes involving information technology systems and serious crimes against the person, *i.e.*, homicides, armed robbery, rape, aggravated assault and serious physical abuse of a VA patient.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. App. 3)

[68 FR 17550, Apr. 10, 2003]

§ 1.205 Notification to the Attorney General or United States Attorney's Office.

VA police and/or the OIG, whichever has primary responsibility within VA for investigation of the offense in question, will be responsible for notifying the appropriate United States Attorney's Office, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 535.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. App. 3, 38 U.S.C. 902)

[68 FR 17550, Apr. 10, 2003]

SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES

§ 1.218 Security and law enforcement at VA facilities.

(a) *Authority and rules of conduct.* Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 901, the following rules and regulations apply at all property under the charge and control of VA (and not under the charge and control of the General Services Administration) and to all persons entering in or on such property. The head of the facility is charged with the responsibility for the enforcement of these rules and regulations and shall cause