Agent Orange linked with prostate problems

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U.S. researchers say they've determined dioxin, the toxin contained in the Vietnam-era herbicide Agent Orange, limits the growth of the prostate gland.

The Air Force Health Study shows the toxin might suppress male hormones, causing infertility and decreased bone and muscle mass, the San Antonio Express-News reported.

The research that started in 1982 is directed by San Antonio- and Dallas-area scientists who track the health of nearly 1,000 veterans who were involved in spraying Agent Orange, the newspaper said. The results came to light when those veterans' health problems were compared with those of 1,300 other Air Force Vietnam personnel who did not directly have contact with the chemical.

The U.S. military sprayed millions of gallons of Agent Orange from 1962-71 to kill vegetation in Vietnam that might be used to conceal enemy troops.

The research appears in the November issue of the journal Environmental Health Perspectives.

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