

JUSTIFICATION B
Accelerated Aging among Vietnam-Era Veterans Survey

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

1. Provide a numerical estimate of the potential respondent universe and describe any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., households or persons) in the universe and the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular format for the universe as a whole and for each strata. Indicate expected response rates. If this has been conducted previously include actual response rates achieved.

This study involves collection of mail and telephone survey data. The potential respondent universe consists of an existing sample of approximately, 10,000 Vietnam-era Veterans who had participated in two prior studies. The first included approximately 6,500 men recruited from the American Legion surveyed in 1984 and 1998. The second included a sample of 2,500 women recruited from the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project (66% response rate) and 1,230 black and Hispanic men, newly recruited through the American Legion, surveyed in 1998. Our response rate target for the mail survey is ~60%, which is consistent with other recent surveys that re-contact Veteran samples, yielding approximately 4,560 survey completers. Mail survey completers will be provided the opportunity to participate in a telephone survey. We anticipate a higher response rate for the telephone portion of the survey (approximately 80%), yielding about 3,650 telephone survey completers.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information, including:

• Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection

The initial projects involved administering surveys to two separate samples. In the first, approximately 6,500 male Vietnam-era Veterans were recruited from the American Legion. In the second data study, approximately 2,500 women were recruited from the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project and 1,230 Hispanic men were recruited through the American Legion. This follow-up study involves re-contacting participants from these three samples.

• Estimation procedure and Degree of accuracy needed

For the follow-up data collections, with an anticipated sample size of approximately 4,560 for the mail survey and 3,650 for the telephone survey, we should have more than adequate power to detect any level of association that may exist among deployment experiences, mental health, and post-military health and well-being, including differences by gender and race/ethnicity.

• Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures

N/A

• Any use of less frequent than annual data collection to reduce burden

The current design for this study consists of one mail survey for all participants, and a telephone survey for a subset of those who complete the mail survey. As of now, this is not an ongoing study with multiple data collection time points.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rate and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

We are collaborating with researchers who collected the original sample, and who have relationships with the American Legion and Women's Vietnam Memorial Foundation. Our collaborators will speak with their contacts to determine useful strategies for maximizing response rate. We will also employ a multiple contact technique, utilizing reminder mailings and possibly telephone calls. Comparisons between responders and non-responders will be conducted.

4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions of 10 or more individuals.

We will apply a well-established survey methodology using scales that have been tested and validated in prior work, and as such we do not anticipate needing additional testing. However, the full survey instrument and phone interview will be administered to a small number of individuals (no more than 9) prior to entering the field, and any refinements (e.g., to clarify instructions) will be made, as needed.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

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We will also work collaboratively with the survey vendor, once the vendor has been established and approved.