

Still Singing the Blues from Agent Orange

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Chloracne is a rare dermatologic condition that occurs after exposure to certain halogenated aromatic hydrocarbons. These substances are found in fungicides, insecticides and herbicides and are termed “chloracnegens”. The disease is characterized by the development of non-inflammatory comedo-like papules along with straw colored cysts that are interspersed throughout the affected skin. The lesions typically involve the malar and periauricular areas of the face, however the trunk and genitals can be involved as well. Diagnosis is made clinically after a positive exposure history to a chloracnegen and a physical exam demonstrating

the non-inflammatory comedo-like lesions. The affected area is then biopsied and taken for histologic examination to confirm the diagnosis. Histology of the pilosebaceous unit is remarkable for the replacement of sebocytes by keratinocytes, hyperpigmentation of the stratum corneum and follicular hyperkeratosis. Treatments for the disease consist of dermabrasion, electrodesiccation, comedone extractions, retinoids and antibiotics. Unfortunately, the disease is difficult to treat and resistant to most therapies. We herein report a case series of two military veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange while serving in Vietnam.