



JET FUEL EXPOSURE SYNDROME STUDY

NEWSLETTER

F-111 Deseal/Reseal & Jet Fuels

WELCOME VOLUNTEERS!

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First off, a huge thank you is in order for volunteering to participate in the Jet Fuel Exposure Syndrome Study - ground breaking research investigating the relationship between exposure to F-111 Deseal/Reseal chemicals, jet fuel and mitochondrial genetic changes.

The JFES Study has arisen as a result of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade *Inquiry into RAAF F-111 Deseal/Reseal workers and their families* recommendation and ongoing research that has continued since the conclusion of the Study into Health Outcomes of Aircraft Maintenance Personnel (SHOAMP).

This is the first of quarterly newsletters we will send out to you to keep you up to date with the progress of the Study, to introduce you to some of the science and scientists and to ask for your feedback.

As of 1 March 2011, research at the Mater Medical Research Institute (MMRI) has officially commenced.

The Study Team at MMRI have started preliminary investigations in tissue culture (in a lab, not humans) to establish which cells are being damaged, at what dose, and which chemical is actually doing the damage. We are trying to establish whether it is the DS/RS Chemicals, or jet fuel, or a combination of both causing the problem.

We will be sending out letters shortly to confirm that you are still interested and to gather some more information on your exposure histories. From there we can work out exactly which group you belong to and start building exposure profiles.



There are just some final logistics arrangements needed, and we can get started on gathering volunteer blood samples.

Once we have identified the randomly selected groups, we will start sending referrals for pathology so you can pop down to your local pathology centre and give us your blood sample.





The JFES Study Project Management Board is the controlling body for the JFES Study Project - providing governance, direction and oversight.

The members of the Project Management Board are accountable for ensuring the project remains within the scope defined and approved in the Business Case.

Additionally, to ensure the most open, honest and transparent process, some supplementary layers of governance have been put in place for this Study:

- a *Scientific Advisory Panel* – to provide external advice on scientific matters related to the conduct of the Study; and
- a *Consultative Forum* – representing the participant groups in the Study. Members will provide comment on ex-servicemen's issues relating to the JFES Study and consult with their organisations on those issues.

The Independent Scientific Advisory Panel will provide advice on scientific matters related to the conduct of the JFES Study.

The committee reports to the Department of Defence and also:

- reviews the research for accuracy and validity;
- monitors progress of program studies from a scientific viewpoint;
- provides regular reports to the Consultative forums through the Chair.

When the Study is complete, the Panel is required to approve the final report, which will then be presented to the Minister for Defence, Science and Personnel and, as directed after the last Inquiry, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, every year.

The first meeting of the Panel was held on 4 April 2011.



Professor Michael Moore -
Chair Scientific Advisory Panel

The newly appointed Scientific Advisory Panel is:

- Professor Michael Moore (Chair) - Emeritus Professor of Toxicology, The University of Queensland
- Professor Frank Bowling - Principal Investigator
- Professor Cate D'Este - Chair of Biostatistics, University of Newcastle
- Professor Ian Gardner - Senior Physician in Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Defence
- Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver - Public Health Epidemiologist, University of NSW
- Professor Peter Warfe - Director, Centre for Military and Veterans Health
- Dr Graeme Killer AO, Principal Medical Advisor, Department of Veterans' Affairs

Keeping us honest..... The Consultative Forum

To ensure that the ex-service community is properly represented and their views heard, we have also appointed a Consultative Forum made up of delegates nominated by each of the ex-service organisations.

The Consultative Forum will be Chaired by the Hon Arch Bevis, who many of you will remember from the most recent Parliamentary Inquiry into F-111 matters.

Mr Bevis has been a long standing, strong proponent for proper recognition for Desealers and their families and has been vitally interested in following the progress of the implementation of the recommendations from the Parliamentary Inquiry.



The Hon Arch Bevis -
Chair Consultative Forum

The Consultative Forum will:

- act as a mechanism for consultation and communication between Defence and the ex-service community about issues relating to the Jet Fuel Exposure Syndrome Study;
- represent ex-services' interests and provide an ex-service community perspective on issues relating to the Study; and
- observe progress of the Study and report back to the wider ex-service community.

The first meeting of the Consultative Forum is scheduled for July. This is your chance to be heard. If you have some questions you would like answered or some information you think would be helpful to the researchers, please get in touch with your local representatives so that they can raise them at the Forum.

The Consultative Forum consists of:

- The Hon Arch Bevis (Chair)
- Representatives from the F-111 DS/RS Support Group
- Representatives from the RAAF Association
- Representatives from the RSL
- Representatives from the Defence Force Welfare Association
- WOFF Blu Hind representing the Chief of Defence Force
- Mr David Janik representing the Department of Veterans' Affairs



Spotlight on a Researcher...

Professor Frank Bowling BSc, PhD, MBBS, FRCPA FHGSA, MBA

Professor Bowling is the Principal Investigator on the Jet Fuel Exposure Syndrome Study. He is currently the Director of Biochemical Diseases at Mater Children's Hospital and is a Professor of Medical Biochemistry at the University of Queensland. Professor Bowling has an active research and clinical interest in the molecular basis of disease, particularly neurodegenerative diseases of children.

Mater Pathology currently has a program investigating treatable

metabolic causes of autism and other paediatric neurological disorders and, in conjunction with Mater Children's Hospital, is one of the first paediatric laboratories to use metabolomics and proteomics to characterize these diseases.

Professor Bowling gave evidence at the Parliamentary Inquiry in 2009 and his previous studies (commissioned by Chief of Air Force) are what prompted the Inquiry to direct Defence to continue research into this area, thus leading to the JFES Study.



**Professor Frank Bowling -
Principal Investigator**

We still need volunteers!



Although the response to the Minister's and Chief of Air Force's call for volunteers has been great, we are still looking for people to make sure we have large enough groups to make the science meaningful, particularly in the Desealer and first degree relative groups. So, if you know anyone who hasn't yet volunteered, give them a nudge.

We are looking for three groups of volunteers:

1. Current or previous members of the RAAF who participated in one of the four formal F-111 Deseal/Reseal Programs;
2. Current or previous members of the RAAF who were NOT involved in the F-111 Deseal/Reseal projects and have NOT had direct exposure to F-111 jet fuel; and
3. First degree relatives (parent, sibling, child) of someone who participated in one of the F-111 Deseal/Reseal programs.

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