

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Karshi-Khanabad (K2)



Army troops follow an airman at Karshi-Khanabad Air Base
United States Air Force, photo by Tech. Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

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Health Outcomes of Military Exposures, PCS, VHA

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K2 Legislation

- National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2021 mandated DoD conduct epidemiologic study on health effects associated with deployment to K2
 - Contracted with Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory
 - Design & conduct an epidemiology study on health (morbidity) outcomes
- PL 116-315, Section 2010 passed DEC 2020, mandated VA contract with Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to assess health effects of K-2
 - Contract ratified with ATSDR MAR 2021
 - ATSDR provided summary report on Contaminants of Concern at K2 (based on DoD site surveys), report sent to Congress JAN 2023
 - ATSDR assist with community forum meetings
- K2 Surveillance Program (K2SP)
 - VA (Epidemiology Program, HOME) to implement and manage
 - Will assess morbidity & mortality over the next 10 years

K2 History

- Former Soviet Airbase in SW Uzbekistan
- Occupied by US Forces 2001 – 2005 to support operations in Afghanistan (OEF)
- Environmental Risk Assessments (2001, 2002, 2004)
 - Heat, noise, and particulate matter (dust)
 - Exposures documented: jet fuel, asbestos, depleted uranium, nerve agents, and blister agents
 - Concentrations were low; contaminated areas were remediated
 - Overall assessment: risks were low and long-term medical monitoring was not needed (US Army Public Health Center Technical Information Paper 98-123-0720, updated July 2020)
- Cancer incidence study (2015)¹
 - Limited to AD and only 10 yrs. post deployment follow-up
 - K2 SMs compared to S. Korea SMs (n=7,100)
 - Mixed results; after adjustment only melanoma and lymphatic/hematopoietic tissue (e.g., Hodgkin's Lymphoma) showed a higher incidence in K2 SMs
 - Only a few of each type of cancer in K2 (7 & 6, respectively); results inconclusive



1- Sharkey & Abraham. Milt Med 2015: Jul-Sep; 68-75.



K2 Surveillance Program (K2SP)

- VA – K2 Surveillance Program
- Entire K2 Roster 15,035 / 9,827 with at least 28 days of K2 deployment documented
 - Two comparison groups: (1) OEF deployed but never to K-2 and (2) OEF-era never deployed to SW Asia
 - 5:1 controls per case in each comparison group
 - Matched on
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Race
 - Branch of service
 - Component (active, NG, Reserves)
 - VHA utilization status
 - Longitudinal database based on health care claims from Military Health System and VHA; updated annually for morbidity assessments & comparisons
 - Mortality Data Repository for mortality assessments & comparisons
 - Morbidity & Mortality analyses will be conducted at periodic intervals over the next 10 years
 - Initial report on Morbidity late Summer of 2023 and Mortality by Winter of 2023
 - This approach allows for rapid response to emerging health concerns



K2 Actions to date

- K2 Veterans are eligible for Depleted Uranium (DU) testing at no cost
 - 138 DU samples collected to date
 - Negative DU isotopic signature found for all 135 assays
- K2 is approved as eligible location for the Airborne Hazards Registry
 - Registry updates go live Oct 2023
- K2 Community Engagement Panel – 29 JUN 2023
 - To meet annually
 - Additional meetings may be scheduled when:
 - There are report results
 - To share changes in legislation / benefits / health care
- K2 Veterans are eligible for ALL PACT Act presumptions



PACT Act Presumptions and K2 Eligibility

DISEASES SPECIFIED

- (1) Asthma
- (2) The following types of cancer:
 - (A) Head cancer of any type.
 - (B) Neck cancer of any type.
 - (C) Respiratory cancer of any type.
 - (D) Gastrointestinal cancer of any type.
 - (E) Reproductive cancer of any type.
 - (F) Lymphoma cancer of any type.
 - (H) Kidney cancer.
 - (I) Brain cancer.
 - (J) Melanoma.
 - (K) Pancreatic cancer.
- (3) Chronic bronchitis.
- (4) Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
- (5) Constrictive bronchiolitis
- (6) Emphysema.
- (7) Granulomatous disease.
- (8) Interstitial lung disease.
- (9) Pleuritis.
- (10) Pulmonary fibrosis.
- (11) Sarcoidosis.
- (12) Chronic sinusitis.
- (13) Chronic rhinitis.
- (14) Glioblastoma.

- (1) The term 'covered veteran' means any veteran who—
 - (A) on or after August 2, 1990, performed active military, naval, air, or space service while assigned to a duty station in, including airspace above—
 - (i) Bahrain;
 - (ii) Iraq;
 - (iii) Kuwait;
 - (iv) Oman;
 - (v) Qatar;
 - (vi) Saudi Arabia;
 - (vii) Somalia; or
 - (viii) United Arab Emirates; or
 - (B) on or after September 11, 2001, performed active military, naval, air, or space service while assigned to a duty station in, including airspace above—
 - (i) Afghanistan;
 - (ii) Djibouti;
 - (iii) Egypt;
 - (iv) Jordan;
 - (v) Lebanon;
 - (vi) Syria;
 - (vii) Yemen;
 - (viii) **Uzbekistan**; or
 - (ix) any other country determined relevant by the Secretary.

This list comprises over 300 presumptions



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Thank you for your service.

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