

## **Top-selling author says flawed vaccinations caused disease**

Scientist blasts MoD over Gulf War Syndrome

By Iain Harrison

AN award-winning scientist says his research into Gulf War Syndrome counters claims by the MoD that it doesn't exist.

Dr Ken McClure, now a best-selling author, investigated the claims of ill veterans while researching his latest novel, *The Gulf Conspiracy*.

The ex-molecular geneticist with the Medical Research Council says his findings point towards flawed vaccinations as the cause of the controversial condition.

Edinburgh-based Dr McClure considered submitting his thesis to the ongoing Gulf War Syndrome (GWS) inquiry.

But he reneged amid fears sceptics would dismiss this as a publicity stunt.

In a frank interview with *The Sunday Post*, Dr McClure reveals how he came up against a wall of silence when he began probing the cause of the disease.

"Around 250,000 veterans are adamant their illness is a direct result of their service in the first Gulf War," he explains.

Crucial

"But the MoD, backed by the medical establishment, insist the range of symptoms reported rules out the possibility of a single syndrome being responsible.

"This is crucial because without the recognition of a single condition there can be no compensation paid out. In my opinion, this is completely wrong.

"GWS is similar to Aids in that there is no single disease called Aids. Sufferers contract a wide range of 'Aids-related conditions' which can include tuberculosis and pneumonia, which attack the immune system.

"I began looking for a single thing which could have destroyed the immune system of Gulf War veterans.

"I concluded that the only thing it could have been was the vaccines given to troops.

"However, when I asked questions about the cocktail of drugs within the vaccines I was told some were classified under the Official Secrets Act." He claims his findings developed even more significance when the MoD admitted to him that 72 per cent of veterans' medical records had gone missing since the war ended.

French troops

Dr McClure hit upon his vaccine theory after studying available data from two "control groups" - soldiers not given the vaccine who did go to the Gulf and soldiers given the vaccine but who did not go to the Gulf.

"Some people claim Saddam's chemical and biological weapons are to blame for the condition while others say it's down to depleted uranium," adds Dr McClure.

"Yet the first group I looked at were French troops who would have been exposed to those. None of them came down with Gulf War Syndrome.

"They did not receive the vaccine prior to going out because their commander-in-chief did not trust it. So what does that suggest?

"I also studied a second control group that included a considerable number of soldiers who'd been given vaccines but did not go out. They did develop GWS symptoms.

"Within this group is Scottish-born GWS sufferer Alex Izett, whose hunger strike led to the inquiry into the disease being set up.

"The fact he, and many others like him, are now suffering from GWS surely completes the case against the vaccines.

Very ill

"The technicalities of what went wrong do not matter, but the fact all these people are very ill does. They should be treated properly and with compassion.

"I knew it would be interesting investigating Gulf War Syndrome, but I was extremely surprised by my findings.

"But whether it was caused by a rogue vaccine, contamination of the vials, or was merely a mistake is something for other scientists to determine."

Although Dr McClure's latest novel - which is currently flying off the shelves in the US - is fiction, he says it's "not far removed from reality".

"I discovered the Army had been working with the HIV virus prior to the first Gulf War, although I couldn't find out why.

"That's what I took as the starting point for the book, with the vaccines being contaminated, but I'll probably never know how close to the truth it is."

While acknowledging some veterans of the 1990/91 Gulf conflict have become ill, the MoD dismiss suggestions that veterans from other countries suffer less ill health than their UK counterparts.

Major study

Ironically, they cite findings published by the Medical Research Council, for whom Dr McClure worked, which said veterans from several coalition countries consistently report suffering more symptoms than non-Gulf veterans.

A spokeswoman added, "The MoD has commissioned a major study into the possible adverse health effects of the administration of a combination of vaccine or nerve agent pre-treatments during the 1990/91 Gulf conflict.

"Preliminary test results were published in April 2003 and indicated no apparent adverse health consequences. Full results are expected to be published later this

year.

"Medical records of service personnel have not gone missing. Details of vaccinations given in theatre were not, in all cases, transferred to individual medical records on return to the UK.

"The MoD have acknowledged this and improved procedures have been put in place."

The Gulf Conspiracy is published by Allison & Busby, £12.99, ISBN 0-7490-0614-5.