



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Federal grant funds local Gulf War Illness research

**PEORIA, Ill.** [April 27, 2016] – The University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria was awarded more than \$700,000 by the U.S. Department of Defense to continue focused research on Gulf War Illness.

The 3-year study will target cellular aspects of the illness, which scientists believe is a type of “chronic neuro-inflammation,” in order to test various therapeutic approaches, including a currently approved drug that has demonstrated some unexpected promise.

“We do know there is an antibiotic that will counter the inflammation but we don’t know how that is being achieved. If we can demonstrate the underlying mechanisms at work, likely we could apply a therapy to veterans who suffer from Gulf War Illness and have it be effective,” said Dr. Stephen Lasley, a toxicologist and professor of pharmacology at UICOMP who has spent the last 15 years researching various aspects of Gulf War Illness.

Dr. Lasley said the research also will shed light on the cause or causes of Gulf War Illness in hopes of preventing future illnesses resulting from exposure to these or similar agents.

Gulf War Illness is characterized by various symptoms including chronic headaches, diffuse joint and muscle pain, cognitive difficulties, debilitating fatigue, respiratory and sleep problems, and other unexplainable abnormalities. Nearly 700,000 people in the U.S. military participated in the 1990-1991 Gulf War. Studies indicate approximately 25-32 percent of Gulf War veterans continue to experience symptoms associated with their deployment, according to the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs.

The University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria (UICOMP) is one of four campuses that make up the largest public medical school in the country. UICOMP educates more than 150 medical students and nearly 270 physicians-in-training annually, is home to the Cancer Research Center, the Center for Outcomes Research, and is a collaborator in Jump Simulation. UICOMP physicians provide care to thousands of patients each year.

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