The examiner denied many of the claims discussed herein by use of the old fallacy that association (or correlation) is not causation.  But that statement is scientifically, medically, and etiologically incorrect.  In fact, it is likely ethically unsound to go about saying that certain conditions are *caused* by certain stimuli when a study or a clinician does not adjust for all possible confounders. *See* Association or causation? How do we ever know?, Catalogue of Bias, <https://catalogofbias.org/2019/03/05/association-or-causation-how-do-we-ever-know/>, last viewed 10/07/2022.  Most medical and scientific studies cannot possibly (or ethically) account for all possible confounders.  The best the author of a medical study—as well as a medical practitioner—can do is take all information into account in rendering the best, most accurate conclusion they can.  For these reasons, precious few medical or scientific articles will list anything as a cause of anything.  Medical treatment has by and large relied on interpreting what is associated or correlated in determining etiology and even diagnosis.

           To summarily deny evidence provided by a veteran because a clinician merely states “association is not causation” without a deeper explanation is intellectually lazy and, worse, ethically unsound to the detriment to the veteran.  That unsupported conclusion amounts to nothing more than mere speculation, and the VA cannot rely on mere speculation from an examiner.