

Fitness to Dive after Neurological Decompression Sickness

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It has been brought to the attention of the Diving Medical Advisory Committee that there is some confusion among examining doctors about fitness to dive after neurological decompression sickness. This confusion would appear to have arisen following some reported cases of central nervous system damage on pathological examination of divers with little or no previous clinical evidence of CNS deficit.

While DMAC is considering the whole question of fitness to return to diving after decompression sickness, and without prejudicing its conclusions, its present information on this specific problem is as follows.

In the present state of knowledge there is insufficient evidence to endorse any policy which would disqualify a diver who has made a complete clinical recovery from an episode of neurological decompression sickness.

At this time, any diver who has suffered from neurological decompression sickness should be allowed to continue diving as long as he has no clinical evidence of a significant neurological deficit.

The confusion which has occurred highlights the need for further research, with adequate control studies, into the problem of pathological CNS damage in relation to episodes of neurological decompression sickness.