

Training of Diving Doctors

Earlier this year, IMCA provided Diving Division members with the latest guidance note from the Diving Medical Advisory Committee (DMAC) – *Approval of Diving Medicine Courses (DMAC 29)*. An article in the February newsletter set out a brief explanation of the new arrangements, edited from the following:

When accident or illness arises on a working dive the medical help available anywhere in the world is usually excellent, commonly from doctors trained when serving in the military or on specialist courses in occupational health or clinical medicine. However, as military deep diving and related diving research has died away over the past 20 years, fewer doctors have gained the expertise needed by the diving industry from this traditional training ground. At the same time there are now more hospital doctors who use hyperbaric oxygen chambers to treat a wide range of medical conditions (including divers with acute decompression illness) but who often lack detailed knowledge of the other medical and physiological hazards of diving.

For the last few years representatives of the European Committee of Hyperbaric Medicine (ECHM), an entirely medical committee, and the medical subcommittee of the European Diving Technology Committee (EDTCmed), have been defining the categories of doctors needed in the fields of hyperbaric and diving medicine and have reviewed the training objectives required to attain competence in those tasks.

In the absence of an alternative approval body, the independent Diving Medical Advisory Committee (DMAC) has come together with EDTCmed to establish a scheme for the approval of training in diving medicine, as set out in DMAC 29 – Approval of Diving Medicine Courses. The scheme covers two levels of course:

Level I courses are for those who wish to be recognised or approved as medical examiners of divers (AMEDs). Similar courses are widely available around the world but in diving medicine each should be regarded as only introductory. Medical examiners should continue to attend periodic refresher courses and some can choose to progress to the more advanced level.

Level IIa courses are for those who provide advice to professional diving organisations and, in particular, for the medical management of diving accidents and illnesses. They are for those who should already be specialists of a clinical speciality (or of an equivalent status outside the EU) often in occupational medicine or the military. The course provides the supplementary training in their own speciality that is needed towards attaining competency in the support of working dives.

IMCA is supportive of this new scheme. It is stressed, however, that neither DMAC nor IMCA approves individual doctors to undertake diving medicals. Details on approved educational establishments can be found on the DMAC website at www.dmac-diving.org

On the following pages are details on forthcoming courses which have been advised to DMAC. Members are asked to pass these details on to interested parties.

DMAC-EDTCmed Approved Courses

- ◆ **The University of Stellenbosch**, South Africa, teaches Basic Underwater Medicine (DMAC-EDTC approved Level I) and Operational Underwater Medicine (DMAC-EDTC Level IIa) as part of its modular programme for BScMedScHons (Underwater Medicine). With a few contact weeks, its modules are based on distance-learning and can be taken separately. Module II will be held in Durban on 12-20 August, 2006. *Summary details are appended.*

Courses for which DMAC-EDTCmed Approval is to be sought

- ◆ **The Royal Netherlands Navy** is holding an advanced course in Den Helder on 15-22 October, 2006. This is an intensive 40-hour course with a high proportion of practical participation which is being submitted for DMAC-EDTC Level IIa approval. Also, on prior application by those who wish, attendance can be recognised towards the Stellenbosch BScMedScHons (Underwater Medicine) programme. *Summary details are appended.*
- ◆ **The University of Pisa** is holding a course leads to a Masters in Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine at the School for Higher Studies, which is being submitted for approval by DMAC-EDTC. It will be in the Italian language. Further details from direzione@iperbaricoravenna.it
- ◆ **The University of Aberdeen** offers three five-day course modules: Introductory Course (Level I approval sought) 4-8 September 2006; Medicine of Compressed Air Diving 3-7 April and Medicine of Mixed Gas Diving 8-12 May. The combination of the latter two modules is being submitted for approval to meet EDTC-DMAC Level IIa. Details at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/deom/teachdiving.shtml>

**Underwater Medicine Training
at the
University of Stellenbosch, South Africa.**

The University of Stellenbosch presents the BScMedScHons (Underwater Medicine) programme, consisting of the following modules (which could each be taken separately):

Module I: Basic Underwater Medicine. This Module enables the successful candidate to register as a Medical Examiner of Divers. It is accredited with the South African Department of Labour, The European Diving Technology Committee (EDTC – Level I) and the Diving Medical Advisory Committee (DMAC).

Module II: Operational Underwater Medicine. This module enables the successful candidate to render operational diving medical support to a group of divers or a diving company/ contractor. This module is also accredited with the EDTC (Level IIa) and DMAC.

Module III: Advanced Underwater Medicine. This module explores the limits of our knowledge of underwater medicine and raises a few research questions. It is not equivalent to the EDTC Level III, although some of the components are shared.

Module IV: Research Methodology. An introduction to Epidemiology and Biostatistics prepares the students for the research project that is part of this module. This module aims to prepare the students to answer some of the questions that were raised in Module III.

Most of this degree programme is presented via the Internet, using text books and keeping the contact time minimal. The following dates are set as contact times for 2006:

Module I:	6 – 9 April and 30 June – 3 July
Module II:	12 – 20 August (combined with module III)
Module III:	12 – 20 August (combined with module II)
Module IV:	30 March – 3 April

For more information, contact Dr Jack Meintjes (wajm@sun.ac.za), the course coordinator.

DUIKMEDISCH CENTRUM

DIVING MEDICAL CENTRE
ROYAL NETHERLANDS NAVY

MEDICAL ASPECTS OF DIVING ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESSES

An advanced course in association with the medical subcommittee of the
European Diving Technology Committee (EDTC)
and the North Sea
Diving Medical Advisory Committee (DMAC)
at HMS Thetis, Den Helder

16-20 October 2006

The functional objectives of this advanced course are directed towards the medical management of all types of diving accidents and illnesses. In addition to Rob van Hulst, Senior Diving Medical Officer of the Royal Netherlands Navy, the teaching faculty supported by naval divers and diving officers will include Hans Ornhagen, lately Director of Research, Swedish Defence Research Agency, and David Elliott, Civilian Consultant to the Royal Navy.

The course is for doctors who have a duty of care for divers at any depth, whether at sea or inland. It will be an intensive theoretical and practical 40-hour course at Level IIa of the European Committee of Hyperbaric Medicine (ECHM) and the European Diving Technology Committee (EDTC) and, as such, is recognised by the International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) as being appropriate world-wide for doctors with responsibilities for commercial diving offshore. It is also suitable advanced training for military medical officers.

Candidates need to have a prior understanding of the basic physiological principles, should have attended an introductory course equivalent to EDTC Level I (for medical examiners of divers) and have some personal experience of diving. The course will include practical sessions in diving and with the recompression chamber. Candidates should meet fitness requirements equivalent to those of the EDTC manual "Medical assessment of working divers" 2004 (ISBN 3-9522284-2-7).

The Tuition Fee will be €1,500. Candidates are responsible for their travel and living expenses.

The week will also be recognised towards meeting essential requirements leading towards the degree of BScMedScHons (Underwater Medicine) a distance learning course of the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa: details from wajm@sun.ac.za.

Places are limited and reservations will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Details on course and accommodation available from:

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The Netherlands
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