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Title: Oxy-helium treatment of severe spinal decompression sickness after air diving

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Abstract: Spinal cord injury in DCS after air diving is relatively frequent and often has late sequelae. U.S. Navy oxygen tables are sometimes not satisfactory. The advantage of using helium in these cases is based theoretically on its physical properties and has been demonstrated in animal models. We have introduced the Comex-30 (CX-30) oxy-helium table as an integral part of our treatment protocol for severe spinal DCS. We summarize here our clinical experience with seven cases. A case was considered severe if clinical assessment suggested progressive neurologic injury to the spinal cord or roots. Except for one case, the initial treatment was CX-30 followed by HBO sessions as indicated. Of the seven patients treated, five made a full recovery and the remaining two were left with mild neurologic sequelae.

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