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Title: Assessment of vertical excursions and open-sea psychological performance at depths to 250 fsw

Authors: Miller, JW
Bachrach, AJ
Walsh, JM

Keywords: decompression
nitrogen
narcosis

Issue Date: 1976

Abstract: A series of 10 two-man descending vertical excursion dives was carried out in the open sea from an ocean-floor habitat off the coast of Puerto Rico by four aquanauts saturated on a normoxic-nitrogen breathing mixture at a depth of 106 fsw. The purpose of these dives was two-fold: to validate laboratory findings with respect to decompression schedules and to determine whether such excursions would produce evidence of adaptation to nitrogen narcosis. For the latter, tests designed to measure time estimation, short-term memory, and auditory vigilance were used. The validation of experimental excursion tables was carried out without incidence of decompression sickness. Although no signs of nitrogen narcosis were noted during testing, all subjects made significantly longer time estimates in the habitat and during the excursions than on the surface. Variability and incomplete data prevented a statistical analysis of the short-term memory results, and the auditory vigilance proved unusable in the water.

Description: Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society, Inc. (<http://www.uhms.org>)

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