

Diving accident surveys

Dear Editor,

There are two main areas relating to diver safety that by their very nature require an ongoing investigation if evidence-based advice is to be provided to reduce their incidence. These are the questions concerning the actual influence of health factors on diver safety and the factors that influence the occurrence of diving-related incidents and problems of all types and severity.

Because of the wide range of diving conditions around the world and the intercontinental mobility of both recreational and professional divers, there is a need for the sharing of information and ideas internationally. Such a solution is not amenable to performance through the efforts of any single individual or research unit. It will necessitate the ongoing cooperation of many individuals, organisations, and groups already involved in collecting such data. It must be both ongoing and multicentric and must have a central coordination to keep those involved informed of what is occurring and to facilitate the dissemination of findings to the wider diving community.

Although safety research has suffered a severe setback recently in many countries through the over restrictive application of confidentiality laws intended to guard personal data, this is not preventing research into road traffic accidents, so there is hope for common sense to prevail in relation to diving-related casualties. In addition, there is an inhibiting fear that information will be hijacked by lawyers and used in court. There must be sufficient anonymity of those providing reports and of the details provided to mitigate, if not eliminate, such risks.

There is a need for an umbrella of patrons to provide international legitimacy and be the fund holder. Some of the most obvious primary patrons would be SPUMS, DAN, PADI, BSAC and NZU, with others being encouraged to join. We in Australia have data from fatalities and non-fatal incidents and it is believed that many unused data exist in other countries, hopefully available to an ethical investigation.

It is hoped that this letter will encourage an active discussion of the suggestion. Such a project will face almost insurmountable active and passive resistance but is believed to be in the long-term interest of all who dive.

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Key words

Letters (to the Editor), diving, safety, accidents, epidemiology

Book review: Mastering rebreathers

Dear Editor

I appreciated the thoughtful review of my book, *Mastering Rebreathers*, provided for the SPUMS Journal by Lynn Taylor. I do, however, wish to clear up one misunderstanding. The comment about the AP Valves Inspiration rebreather being absent from the book (and especially the appendices) is quite pertinent. However, it was implied that I perhaps purposely excluded the unit. This was not the case.

I contacted AP Valves on five different occasions to have their products included. I did this while writing text copy, writing the specific rebreather appendices, and again when contacting manufacturers for the Rebreather Supporters section. AP Valves declined to participate in every instance. Since my policy was not to include a manufacturer appendix unless they reviewed the section for accuracy, I was, unfortunately, unable to provide any information on their product. I am hopeful that will change in the next edition.

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Key words

Letters (to the Editor), book reviews, technical diving