

Title: DECOMPRESSION ILLNESS AMONG CAVE DIVERS FROM YUCATAN PENINSULA

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Abstract: **BACKGROUND:** Cave divers in Yucatan Peninsula experience decompression illness during their diving practices. There are limited reports of DCI involving technical divers. The aim of the present study was to show the presentation of decompression illness in cave divers of the Yucatan Peninsula.
MATERIALS AND METHODS: A review was done on 28 cases of DCI among cave divers treated in our Recompression facilities located in Yucatan Peninsula during the years January 1998 to December 2003.
RESULTS: We had 28 cases of DCI. Eleven of the patients were from US, 10 from Mexico and 7 from other countries. 23 (82percent) were men and 5 women. Twenty one were instructors and 6 were Open water divers on instruction. The median of years diving of the instructors were 8 years, with average logged dives of 1486 per instructor. Eight had previous DCI. During the dive 13 (46percent) reported problems related to Buoyancy, Depth-time limits or fast ascent. 50percent reported single dives, the depth average was 70 fsw with a range from 45 to 348 fsw. Twenty presented neurological symptoms with pain on joints and constitutional symptoms, and eight (28percent) complaints of pain and constitutional symptoms. 25percent had minor sequels after treatments.
CONCLUSIONS: The cave divers on Yucatan Peninsula are an at risk population to present DCI. In this study there is evidence of the level of experience of the divers with DCI, the range of depth and mix of symptoms presentation.

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