

## WE CAN ALL LEARN FROM THIS

Our diver entered the water in Mercury Bay at one of his favourite dive sites to successfully hunt crays.

He surfaced after a dive to 31.5 metres for 46 min. After a surface interval of 1:49 he re entered and went to 27.6 metres for a further 23 min.

I presume the diver was using a computer or the profile would be prohibitive.

After returning home he noticed a deep dull pain in his shoulder but thought he probably pulled a muscle while cray hunting.

Two days later he went for another dive of an unspecified depth or duration.

After a shower he noticed a crackling sound when drying himself, so wisely rang the naval base and was told to present for treatment, which he did.

At the time of filling out the report his relief was partial, but the therapy was incomplete.

Conclusions:

This is a case where the most probable cause of Decompression sickness was an accumulation of nitrogen over a period of time. Although outgassing theory works over a finite, period in my experience DCS will often occur after a seemingly low risk dive following a series of deep dives, which is why we are encouraged to take a break from diving of 24hrs during those extended diving holidays or if you happen to live conveniently close to a dive site.

We all need to remember that dive tables and computers are not an exact science and allowances have to be made by us personally taking age, condition and frequency of dives etc into consideration.

Another point to ponder is the shower. A great many dive boats have hot showers available to warm you up after a dive just as our diver had when he got home.

Hot showers can increase the blood flow in the skin area thus dropping the internal pressure of the blood rapidly which can cause the Nitrogen to bubble just like our bottle of fizzy drink from the class room. The resulting problem will be DCS.

This gentleman needs to be commended on his actions, in firstly recognising he had a problem and then acting on his knowledge to obtain help from the experts.

The second is that he has shared his experience with us in order that we may learn and dive more conservatively

If you have had a dive incident please contact NZUA and fill out an incident report so that we all can learn without making the same repeat mistakes.

Safe Diving

Rex Gilbert Accident/Incident recorder