

THE WORLD AS IT IS

CERTIFICATION IN DIVING AND HYPERBARIC MEDICINE IN AMERICA AND AUSTRALIA

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Key Words

Qualifications.

The 2000 May/June issue of *PRESSURE* contains two articles about Certification in Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine in the United States of America. Although the SPUMS Diploma of Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine (DDHM) was introduced in 1974, and has become the de facto qualification in Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine in Australasia, Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine has not been accepted as a speciality, or even a sub-speciality, in Australasia.

The United States has, thanks to many years of negotiation between the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMS) and the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), become the first English speaking country to accept Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine as a speciality, albeit a sub-speciality (labelled Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine) held by someone who is already Board Certified in some other speciality. This new sub-specialty certification is now a recognised element in the American Medical Association's system of certification. Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine has come of age in America.

The first examination for certification in Undersea Medicine was administered by the American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM) in November 1992. Last year the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) agreed to change the sub-speciality's name to Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine to reflect the expansion of practice during the past decade to include regular use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy for a variety of disorders. The first examination for this qualification was held in November 1999. Fifty candidates passed the exam, including the President of UHMS, Dr Caroline Fife, and two past Guest Speakers at SPUMS Annual Scientific Meetings, Drs Fred Bove and Richard Moon.

This November an examination, sponsored by the American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) and ABPM and approved by ABMS, for certification in

Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine will be held. The date for applying to sit is now past but UHMS will be running a Refresher Course in Hyperbaric and Undersea Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland on 23 September. Everyone who took the Refresher Course last year in San Antonio passed the certification exam. Those wishing to attend the 2000 course should notify the UHMS office before 2000/7/1. The examination is open to all physicians boarded in any primary medical specialty, viz. medicine, surgery, emergency medicine, etc. who have completed one of two eligibility pathways either an Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine Fellowship or Undersea and Hyperbaric Medicine Training Plus Practice.

Eligibility criteria are available from the two sponsoring Boards at <http://www.abem.org> and <http://www.abprevmed.org>.

In Australasia the Special Interest Group (SIG) in Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) is formulating a training scheme and syllabus to extend Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine education beyond the requirements of the SPUMS diploma. It is investigating asking the ANZCA to set up a certificate of training and competence in diving and hyperbaric medicine, which will be a higher qualification in these subjects. This path has been followed by the SIG in pain medicine, which has graduated to being the Faculty of Pain Medicine and is open to non-anaesthetists who are involved in pain relief.

As can be seen from the letter from the Chairman of the SIG on page 88, there have been some teething problems. Anyone interested in the Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine SIG, which has been formed to provide a forum, beyond the Annual Scientific Meetings of SPUMS, for discussion about diving and hyperbaric medicine, and to educate other members of the medical profession, especially anaesthetists, emergency physicians, intensive care physicians and those involved in all branches of surgery where hyperbaric oxygen can be expected to improve patient treatment and outcome, should contact Ms Helen Morris at the ANZCA for further information and to register their interest.

The address of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists is 630 St Kilda Road, Melbourne, Victoria 3004, Australia.

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