

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PUBLICATION OF SPUMS POLICIES

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13 January 1998

Dear Editor

I write to express some concern about an aspect of the current editing of the SPUMS Journal.

Under "SPUMS Notices" there is a segment entitled *The SPUMS Policy on Initial Management of Diving Injuries and Illnesses*. There are five authors and this appears merely to be an article.

In the first segment under "An Introduction to SPUMS Policies" there is what appears to be an attempted explanation of the rationale for society policies. However, it would seem that these "have been the product of individuals or small working groups", also workshops, and in future, the newly formed ExPresidents' Committee will be asked to develop some "Society Policies".

As a long-time member of this Society, I believe that a "Policy" is a document which should:

- 1 reflect best practice and
- 2 represent the views of the Society, or of its representatives.

It follows that nothing should be published as a Society Policy unless it has been presented, at the very least, to a formal meeting of the Executive Committee and ratified by them, as representatives of the members, as representing the views of the Society.

The views of individuals, however worthy, knowledgeable, and prominent in the society, should not, in my view, be labelled as policies of SPUMS without going through this process.

I hasten to add that I have little problem with the content on a personal note, but I believe that to push out individuals' views as the Society's Policies without any form of endorsement by the Society or its elected representatives reduces enormously the validity of the so-called Policies.

I make these remarks as constructive. If the Society is seen to allow any member, ex-member or friend of the in-group to write a piece, and then publish it as Society Policy, the Society will inevitably lose credibility.

I hope you will accept these comments as constructive, from a long-time member and occasional critic!

Harry F Oxer
Director

Key Words

Letters, policies.

Editor's Comment

In fact the Committee did consider the document and decided that it should be published at its meeting in Adelaide on November 1st 1997. However as the next meeting of the Committee has not yet occurred the Minutes of that meeting are not being published in this issue of the Journal. Dr Oxer can rest assured that the Committee has acted on behalf of the membership in the way that he desires.

A DIVER SUPPORT NETWORK

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12/1/98

Dear Editor

Some time ago I had a diving accident overseas, which resulted in neurological decompression illness (DCI) which was successfully treated before I returned to Australia.

After my return I found it difficult to access a co-ordinated means of contacting medical professionals and therapists who were divers and who I felt would be more able to understand the nature of the post-traumatic stress that I was experiencing. I would also have liked an opportunity to discuss my accident with a sympathetic diver who had experienced a similar incident.

I wish to bring to your readers' attention the idea of a Diver Support Network which would offer a range of easily accessible services such as:

- 1 A means of putting an injured diver in touch with a sympathetic diver who has shared a similar experience. This would enable the diver to talk through the incident and help make re-entry to diving that much easier.
- 2 Provide a list of doctors and therapists who are divers and therefore more able to understand the nature of the diving environment and any on going problems the diver may be having. These would include anxiety disorders or post-traumatic stress.