

asthma, diabetes and certain prescription medications) are known to increase the risk of diving injuries, and these are not always obvious. Finally, I observed and participated in the diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of diving injuries, from middle ear barotrauma, pulmonary barotrauma and animal stings to decompression illness (DCI).

Later, I reported a case of *cutis marmorata*.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly within days of being published online, this case report and the accompanying image appeared on a popular diving forum, with divers commenting on the usefulness of seeing first-hand such a common clinical sign of DCI.

On one of my general practice placement visits, I saw a patient who had developed a middle ear barotrauma. Following appropriate advice, she wanted to discuss her daughter's diving problems and I referred her to the UK Sports Diving Medical Committee website for contact details of local, approved diving medical referees.<sup>3</sup> Potential divers requiring a medical clearance often present to their own doctor (general practitioner), who may not be aware of the diving regulations and contra-indications so they can counsel patients appropriately.<sup>4</sup> With this in mind, I have set out to raise awareness amongst general practitioners (Modell MM, Glew S, Sornalingam S, Cooper M, unpublished work) on how to provide onward referral to diving medical specialists.

I would highly recommend such an elective to both medical students and qualified doctors interested in emergency medicine or sports medicine. With dive trips to remote locations easily accessible, both divers and doctors should be aware of severe diving-injuries.

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## Key words

Diving, hyperbaric medicine, scuba, medical education, tourism, fitness to dive, letters (to the Editor)

**Figure 1**

Fourth-year UK medical student Michael Modell at the Hyperbaric Medical Centre, Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt



## Immersion pulmonary oedema and diving fatalities

The report by Smart et al is very interesting.<sup>1</sup> They note that “forensic pathologists should be properly trained in and have guidelines for the conduct of post-immersion and post-diving autopsies.” In the medical curriculum, there is little on diving medicine and many pathologists have little knowledge on this issue.<sup>2,3</sup> For example, in coastal Thailand, a very popular region for scuba diving, there are no pathologists with a specific training in diving medicine, and the issue here is how to improve their knowledge. The investigation of diving fatalities is well summarised by Busuttill and Obafunwa: “a multi-disciplinary approach that involves co-divers and instructors, the rescue team, the police, forensic scientists, diving equipment suppliers, underwater physiologists and physicians, decompression chamber personnel, general practitioners, relatives and the forensic pathologist” is required for any investigation of diving deaths.<sup>3</sup>

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Immersion, pulmonary oedema, scuba diving, deaths, letters (to the Editor)