A Case Series of Decompression Illness in Miskito Fishermen Divers Treated in 2010 at Clínica La Bendición.

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BACKGROUND: Miskito fishermen suffer high rates of decompression illness (DCI) while diving remotely from the nearest hyperbaric facility. Only divers with severe symptoms seek treatment. The purpose of this paper was to explore prognostic factors of outcomes in treated DCS cases.

RESULTS:

Number of divers 123
Number of DCI cases 128
Mean age (years) 33 (20-59)
Neurological presentation 118 (92 %)
Motor weakness 101 (79 %)
Legs 65 (51 %)
Arms and legs 32 (25 %)
Arms 4 (3 %)
Bladder sphincter involvement 33 (26 %)
In-water recompression 91 (71 %)
Median delay to treatment 5 (1-50) days
Improvement prior to admission 57 (26 %)
Gross functional recovery at discharge 103 (81 %)
- mean HBOT 3 treatments
Residual dysfunction despite treatment 19 (15 %)
- mean HBOT 12 treatments
No improvement 4 (3 %)
Deceased 2 (1 %)

The only significant prognostic factor of gross functional recovery at discharge was the involvement of bladder sphincter, which increased the risk of residual symptoms (OR 19, 95% CI: 7-51).

CONCLUSIONS: Despite severe manifestations of DCS and long delays to standard recompression, most injured Miskito divers recovered significantly after standard HBOT. The duration of delay, the distribution of motor weakness and the natural evolution of symptoms before admission did not seem to affect the success of HBOT.

METHODS: The treating physician reviewed his medical notes of fishermen treated for DCI at Clinica La Benedición in 2010. He extracted data about age, sex, diving history, type of symptoms, preadmission management, delay to treatment, treatment and outcomes in a de-identified research dataset. Logistic regression was applied to explore which among the available variables may affect the ultimate outcome of DCI.