Management of a scuba diving accident

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Each year, Divers Alert Network (DAN) emergency hotlines receive calls about hundreds of diving accidents throughout the world. Many of these accidents occur in remote locations, often in developing countries with relatively poor medical facilities. Many diving accidents require specific first aid measures, including appropriate victim positioning, the administration of near-100% oxygen, and, in the event of decompression illness, often prompt transportation to a suitable recompression chamber, capable of treating the victim.

There is an expectation, and in many places, a duty of care, for dive operators to have appropriate oxygen equipment and someone trained in oxygen administration at the dive site. However, there are still many operators, especially in developing countries, who fail to provide this, sometimes increasing the level of morbidity and mortality. In addition, most medical professionals are untrained in the diagnosis and management of diving accidents and this can lead to mismanagement of diving accident victims within the healthcare system. This can occur both in developed and developing countries.

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