SUMMARY OF MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS OF SEAFARERS CONDUCTED BY APPROVED DOCTORS 1 January – 31 December 2016

Required in accordance with The Merchant Shipping (Medical Certification) Regulations 2010

1. SUMMARY OF APPROVED DOCTORS' DECISIONS

Fitness Cat.	Result	Validity Period	Form Issued	Number Issued
Cat 1	UNRESTRICTED	2 voars	ENG 1	44497
	UNRESTRICTED	2 years Less than 2 years – non medical reasons e.g. under 18 years	ENG 1	313
	UNRESTRICTED - U (TL)	Less than 2 years – medical reasons	ENG 1	4481
Cat 2	RESTRICTED - R	2 years	ENG 1 + ENG 3	1004
	RESTRICTED - R (TL)	Less than 2 years – medical reasons	ENG 1 + ENG 3	1450
Cat 3	TEMPORARILY UNFIT - TU	Any	ENG 3	694
Cat 4	FAILURE - F	Permanent	ENG 3	119
No. of I	Returns entered = 255	TOTAL No. OF EXA	MINATIONS	52558

2. ANNUAL COMPARISON OF EXAMINATIONS AND MEDICAL REVIEWS

TOTAL	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Exams	28606	31660	318388	35104	36056	39346	40472	42257	47482	51759	52200	54311	54058	52946	52558
ENG	91	71	63	70	80	71	90	81	66	51	48	41	31	47	46
Referral															

3. ANALYSIS OF REFEREES' DECISIONS ON APPEAL CASES

Medical Category	AD's Decision Upheld	AD's Decision changed	Cases awaiting decision	Cases withdrawn	TOTAL
Cancers	0	0	0	0	0
Endocrine and metabolic	0	4	0	0	4
Blood disorders	3	0	0	0	3
Mental disorders	2	5	0	0	7
Diseases of the nervous system	2	0	0	0	2
Cardio-vascular system	1	3	0	0	4
Respiratory system	2	4	2	1	9
Digestive system	0	2	0	0	2
Genito-urinary conditions	0	1	0	0	1
Musculo-skeletal	0	1	0	0	1
Sensory	7	0	0	2	9
General	1	1	1	0	3
Physical fitness	0	0	0	0	0
Skin	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown (geographical/incomplete)	0	0	1	0	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES	18	21	4	3	46

Key: U(TL) – Unrestricted (less than 2 years) R- Restricted (2 years);
R(TL) - Restricted (less than 2 years);
F- Failed; TU – Temporarily Unfit An Executive Agency of the Department for Transport

Ref No	Condition	U(TL)	R	R(TL)	TU	F
1.0	INFECTIONS					
1.1	Gastro intestinal infection	1	0	0	0	0
1.2	Other infection	3	1	1	3	0
1.3	Pulmonary TB	8	0	0	6	6
1.4	Sexually transmissible diseases	2	0	0	0	0
1.5	HIV +	21	1	2	0	0
1.6	Hepatitis A	1	0	0	2	0
1.7	Hepatitis B, C etc	79	0	4	2	0
2.0						
2.1	Malignant neoplasms	119	17	59	13	7
3.0						
3.1	Endocrine disease	48	2	3	5	1
3.2	Diabetes – non insulin treated by diet	78	2	18	11	0
3.3	Diabetes - non-insulin treated by oral medication	390	19	106	24	1
3.4	Diabetes - insulin using	45	21	66	7	3
3.5	Obesity / abnormal body mass	1706	47	252	91	6
4.0						
4.1	Blood-forming organs	31	1	4	1	3
4.2	Anaemia	31	0	1	3	1
4.3	Splenectomy (history of surgery)	3	3	3	0	0
5.0						
5.0	Psychosis (acute)	0	0	3	2	3
5.2	Alcohol abuse (dependency)	9	1	8	4	1
5.3	Drug dependence / persistent substance abuse	1	0	0	3	0
5.4 a	Mood / affective disorders severe anxiety state, depression, or any other mental disorder likely to impair performance	12	5	35	31	7
5.4 b	Mood / affective disorders minor or reactive symptoms of anxiety/depression	146	13	71	24	1

Ref No	Condition	U(TL)	R	R(TL)	TU	F
5.5	Disorder of personality - clinically recognised	1	0	1	0	0
5.6	Disorder of psychological development - autism, Aspergers syndrome	0	0	0	0	0
5.7	Hyperkinetic disorders - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	18	1	1	4	0
5.8	Other mental health and cognitive disorders	3	0	1	0	0
6.0						
6.1	Organic nervous disease e.g multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease	23	2	14	8	2
6.2	Syncope	1	0	3	2	0
6.3	Epilepsy - no provoking factors	6	7	7	8	1
6.4	Epilepsy provoked by alcohol, medication, head injury	2	1	1	3	0
6.5	Risk of seizures from intra-cranial surgery	3	2	1	0	0
6.6	Migraine	3	4	2	2	0
6.7	Meniere's disease	1	0	3	0	0
6.8	Sleep apnoea	13	3	4	0	0
6.9	Narcolepsy	0	0	1	1	1
7.0						
7.1	Heart – congenital and valve disease	38	3	18	19	3
7.2	Hypertension	1148	23	423	117	6
7.3	Cardiac event	126	10	71	18	2
7.4	Cardiac arrhythmias	73	16	36	26	3
7.5	Other heart disease	72	7	22	16	2
7.6	Ischaemic cerebrovascular disease	16	3	16	6	5
7.7	Arterial – claudication	2	2	2	5	1
7.8	Varicose veins	17	2	1	1	0
7.9	Deep vein thrombosis / pulmonary embolus	3	4	8	1	1
8.0						
8.1	Sinusitis / nasal obstruction	0	0	1	0	0
8.2	Throat infections	0	0	0	1	0
8.3	Chronic bronchitis and /or emphysema	20	5	17	4	3
8.4	Asthma	43	41	24	29	4
8.5	Pneumothorax	0	1	2	2	0

Ref No	Condition	U(TL)	R	R(TL)	TU	F
9.0						
9.1	Oral Health	22	21	22	32	0
9.2	Peptic ulcer	3	1	1	2	0
9.3	Non infectious enteritis, colitis, Crohn's disease, diverticulitis etc.	29	15	38	7	1
9.4	Stoma (ileostomy, colostomy)	0	3	7	0	0
9.5	Cirrhosis of liver	2	0	1	0	4
9.6	Biliary tract disease, biliary colic	1	0	4	4	1
9.7	Pancreatitis	1	0	2	1	0
9.8	Anal conditions: piles (haemorrhoids) fissures, fistulae	15	1	4	2	0
9.9	Hernias – inguinal and femoral	7	9	14	14	0
9.10	Hernias –umbilical	1	7	5	3	1
9.11	Hernias – diaphragmetic (hiatus)	1	1	2	1	0
10.0						
10.1	Proteinuria, haematuria, glycosuria, or other urinary abnormality	93	5	24	63	4
10.2	Acute nephritis	0	0	1	0	0
10.3	Sub acute or chronic nephritis or nephrosis	4	6	8	1	0
10.4	Acute urinary infection	0	1	3	0	0
10.5	Renal or ureteric calculus renal colic	32	11	16	9	1
10.6	Prostatic enlargement / Urinary obstruction	13	2	1	0	1
10.7	Removal of kidney or one non-functioning kidney	0	2	5	0	0
10.8	Incontinence of urine	0	1	0	1	0
10.9	Heavy vaginal bleeding or other gynecological conditions	4	1	5	1	0
11.0						
11.0	Pregnancy	4	2	37	6	0
12.0						
12.0	Skin infections	5	1	1	1	0
12.2	Other skin diseases e.g. eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis	20	4	9	2	1

Ref No	Condition	U(TL)	R	R(TL)	TU	F
13.0						
13.1	Osteo arthritis, other joint diseases and subsequent joint replacement	52	12	45	31	12
13.2	Recurrent instability of shoulder or knee joints	3	2	1	3	0
13.3	Limb prosthesis	1	4	1	0	0
13.4	Back pain	27	11	17	6	4
14.0						
14.1	Speech defect	0	0	0	0	0
14.2	Otitis – externia and media	5	2	2	1	0
14.3	Hearing	179	42	38	31	7
14.4	Eyesight – Visual acuity	17	188	36	45	10
	Colour vision	53	437	56	22	11
	Other sight problems	17	14	13	7	3
15.0						
15.1	Prescribed medication	401	20	39	9	4
15.2	Transplants – kidney, heart, lung, liver	1	1	4	0	0
15.3	Progressive conditions	3	3	2	1	1
15.4	Allergies (other than allergic dermatitis and asthma)	4	11	11	21	7
15.5	Conditions not specifically listed	142	14	35	16	3
16.0						
16.0	Physical fitness (see Appendix 2 of MSN 1839)	66	8	23	15	3

Each year all MCA Approved Doctors (ADs) complete a return. This lists the number of medical examinations performed, and how many medical certificates have been issued in each category (fit for service worldwide and fit for restricted duties whether for two vears or a limited time) as well as how many seafarers are made temporarily or permanently unfit. The medical reasons for all restricted certificates and decisions of unfitness are anonymously noted. Each year the MCA analyses these returns and produces this summary report. At this stage, this information is collected from paper records and so only limited analysis is possible. It does however enable the pattern of illnesses to be noted and any major trends to be highlighted. The pattern of past years was largely unchanged in 2016.

Seafarers who are failed or issued with a restricted certificate are able to seek a review of the AD's decision by an independent medical referee if they have reservations about the initial decision. The results of the referee reviews are also presented. Fuller details of the procedures for Approved Doctors and referees can be found in MSN 1839 and in the MCA Approved Doctor's Manual, which can be found on line at

https://www.gov.uk/government/public ations/the-approved-doctors-manual

Although the total number of medical examinations had been steadily climbing for over 10 years, this trend has ceased,

and numbers for the past three years have very slightly decreased from a maximum of 54,311 in 2013 to 52,558 in 2016. Numbers of overseas medicals in areas relating to the yachting sector have remained stable, while those in the Philippines have decreased.

Referrals to referees, having dropped significantly after the revision of the guidelines in 2010 would appear to have stabilised, with anything from 30 to 50 reviews each year. Of the 46 referred in 2016, 18 had their decision upheld and 21 had the decision amended, 3 having withdrawn their appeal and 4 still awaiting a decision at the time of compilation. A change in decision does not necessarily mean that the end result was more lenient, however.

Analysis of all conditions underlying a restricted or time limited certificate, or unfitness, showed that the majority were due to obesity, hypertension and diabetes. Cardiovascular conditions were responsible for the highest number of decisions of unfitness, whether temporary or permanent. Defective colour vision was the most likely cause of restriction, followed by hypertension (which is likely to have been combined with other conditions). As every condition noted for each seafarer is recorded, as they may have several different conditions leading to their fitness decision, it is not possible at present to report whether hypertension was seen with other diagnoses such as obesity or diabetes, although this seems likely.

We continue to emphasise the importance of physical capability testing in obese seafarers, and the guidance in the 2015 revision of the AD Manual was altered to reflect the importance of this assessment. The importance of careful colour vision testing using Ishihara plates is frequently highlighted, while supplementary testing for deck candidates failing the Ishihara is soon to change from the Holmes Wright B lantern (rapidly becoming obsolete) to the City University Colour Assessment and Diagnosis test which research has shown will give an equivalent result.

The potential for analysis of the useful data collected by ADs is limited when working with only paper systems, but we continue to work towards the development of a fully electronic system of certification. We hope that this will automatically collect the data represented within the annual returns system, and will allow much simpler review of data regarding health patterns and trends. This system will produce huge benefits for MCA, Approved Doctors, seafarers and their employers, and will allow us to gain better control of fraud in medical certification.

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