

# SUMMARY OF MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS OF SEAFARERS CONDUCTED BY APPROVED DOCTORS

1 January – 31 December 2009

Required in accordance with Regulation 12(b) of the Merchant Shipping (Medical Examination) Regulations 2002

#### 1. SUMMARY OF APPROVED DOCTORS' DECISIONS

Fitness Cat.	Result	Validity Period	Form Issued	Number Issued
Cat 1	UNRESTRICTED	2 years	ENG 1	36045
	UNRESTRICTED	Less than 2 years – non medical reasons e.g. under 18 years	ENG 1	356
	UNRESTRICTED - <b>U (TL</b> )	Less than 2 years – medical reasons	ENG 1	3253
Cat 2	RESTRICTED - <b>R</b>	2 years	ENG 1 + ENG 3	1015
	RESTRICTED - <b>R (TL)</b>	Less than 2 years – medical reasons	ENG 1 + ENG 3	982
Cat 3	TEMPORARILY UNFIT*- <b>TU</b>	Any	ENG 3	486
Cat 4	FAILURE - <b>F</b>	Permanent	ENG 3	120
No. of I	Returns entered = 246	<b>TOTAL No. OF EXA</b>	42257	

#### **2 ANNUAL COMPARISON OF EXAMINATIONS AND MEDICAL REVIEWS**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total no. of examinations	26458	28606	31660	31388	35104	36056	39346	40472	42257
Cases referred to medical referees	87	91	71	63	70	80	71	90	81

#### 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Medical Category	AD's Decision Upheld	AD's Decision changed	Cases awaiting decision	Cases withdrawn	TOTAL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		3			3
Endocrine and metabolic	3	5		1	9
Blood disorders		3	1		4
Mental disorders		3			3
Diseases of the nervous system	3	1	1	1	6
Cardio-vascular system	6	12			18
Respiratory system	2	4			6
Digestive system					
Genito-urinary conditions					
Musculo-skeletal	2	9	1	1	13
Sensory		12		1	13
General	2	2			4
Physical fitness		2			2

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES	36	56	3	4	81

**Key: U(TL)** – Unrestricted (less than 2 years) **R-** Restricted (2 years); **R(TL)** - Restricted (less than 2 years) **F-** Failed; **TU** – Temporarily Unfit

Ref No	Condition	U(TL)	R	R(TL)	F	TU
1.0	INFECTIONS					
1.1	Gastro intestinal infection	5	0	0	0	5
1.2	Other infection	5	1	1	0	5
1.3	Pulmonary TB	1	0	1	0	2
1.4	Sexually transmissible diseases	0	0	0	0	0
1.5	HIV +	2	0	1	0	1
2.0	CANCERS					
2.1	Malignant neoplasms	63	7	35	2	6
3.0	ENDOCRINE AND METABOLIC					
3.1	Endocrine disease	33	5	9	0	3
3.2	Diabetes – non insulin	302	24	127	5	27
3.3	Diabetes - insulin using	10	9	26	6	2
3.4	Obesity / abnormal body mass	1223	68	223	9	74
4.0	BLOOD DISORDERS					
4.1	Blood-forming organs	7	6	5	0	3
4.2	Anaemia	2	2	0	0	1
4.3	Splenectomy (history of surgery)	2	1	1	0	1
5.0	MENTAL DISORDERS					
5.1	Psychosis (acute)	3	1	5	4	2
5.2	Alcohol abuse (dependency)	13	2	3	0	2
5.3	Drug dependence / persistent substance abuse	0	1	2	3	0
5.4	Neurosis e.g anxiety state, depression	45	10	25	7	16
6.0	DISEASES OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM					
6.1	Organic nervous disease e.g multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease	4	1	6	3	3

Ref No	Condition	U(TL)	R	R(TL)	F	TU
6.2	Epilepsy	1	10	4	2	9
6.3	Cranial surgery	3	0	3	0	0
6.4	Migraine (frequent attacks causing incapacity)	2	1	1	1	1
6.5	Syncope	5	1	2	0	0
6.6	Meniere's disease	1	0	1	0	3
7.0	CARDIO-VASCULAR SYSTEM					
7.1	Heart – congenital heart disease	11	1	3	0	3
7.2	Hypertension	1104	41	361	2	84
7.3	Cardiac event	44	28	66	4	8
7.4	Cardiac arrhythmias	36	7	28	5	21
7.5	Other heart disease	49	8	42	6	9
7.6	Ischaemic cerebrovascular disease	15	10	21	7	5
7.7	Arterial – claudication	5	4	10	2	2
7.8	Varicose veins	13	2	3	1	0
7.9	Deep vein thrombosis / pulmonary embolus	5	2	3	0	3
7.10	Piles	2	0	1	0	0
8.0	RESPIRATORY SYSTEM					
8.1	Sinusitis / nasal obstruction	5	0	0	0	1
8.2	Throat infections	4	0	0	0	1
8.3	Chronic bronchitis and /or emphysema	40	1	7	7	6
8.4	Asthma	22	80	22	2	7
8.5	Pneumothorax	0	0	1	0	2
9.0	DIGESTIVE SYSTEM					
9.1	Diseases of the mouth and teeth	52	18	7	0	20
9.2	Peptic ulcer	5	1	2	0	1
9.3	Recurrent attacks of appendicitis	0	0	0	0	0

Ref No	Condition	U(TL)	R	R(TL)	F	TU
9.4	Non infectious enteritis, colitis, diverticulitis etc.	22	7	32	1	4
9.5	Stoma	0	3	3	0	1
9.6	Cirrhosis of liver	2	0	1	0	2
9.7	Biliary tract disease	7	1	4	0	0
9.8	Pancreatitis	1	0	2	0	2
10.0	GENITO-URINARY CONDITIONS					
10.1	Proteinuria, glycosuria, or other urinary abnormality	104	5	26	0	52
10.2	Acute nephritis	0	0	1	0	0
10.3	Sub acute or chronic nephritis or nephrosis	8	2	4	1	4
10.4	Acute urinary infection	11	0	1	0	1
10.5	Renal or ureteric calculus	7	5	3	0	3
10.6	Prostatic enlargement/urinary obstruction	2	0	1	0	1
10.7	Removal of kidney	1	3	2	1	1
10.8	Incontinence of urine	0	0	0	0	1
10.9	Gynaecological conditions	3	1	0	0	0
11.0	PREGNANCY					
11.1	Pregnancy	2	1	23	0	0
12.0	SKIN					
12.1	Skin infections	0	2	0	0	1
12.2	Other skin diseases eg eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis	10	4	2	1	2
13.0	MUSCULO-SKELETAL					
13.1	Joint diseases and joint replacement	63	22	22	29	18
13.2	Recurrent instability of shoulder or knee joints	1	1	2	4	3
13.3	Limb prosthesis	0	6	1	1	1
13.4	Back pain	12	25	14	5	15
13.5	Hernia	21	9	8	0	25

Ref No	Condition	U(TL)	R	R(TL)	F	TU
14.0	SENSORY					
14.1	Speech defect	0	0	0	0	0
14.2	Otitis – externia and media	3	2	3	0	3
14.3	Deafness	21	9	5	4	6
14.4	Eyesight – Visual acuity	8	167	23	11	18
	Colour vision	2	411	41	5	4
	Other sight problems	14	8	6	2	2
15.0	GENERAL					
15.1	Prescribed medication	21	7	40	0	4
15.2	Transplants – kidney, heart, lung, liver	0	1	2	0	1
15.3	Conditions not specifically listed	66	1	24	4	22
15.4	Progressive conditions	9	0	2	0	2
16.0	PHYSICAL FITNESS					
16.0	Physical fitness (Ref Appendix 2 to Annex B )	24	4	19	1	15

## COMMENTARY

- Each year the returns of numbers of seafarer medical examinations carried out by MCA Approved Doctors (ADs) and their outcomes are summarised and the overview distributed to those who have contributed and to other interested parties.
- 2. In 2009 the total number of examinations carried out by MCA Approved Doctors was 42257 compared with 40472 in 2008. These numbers relate to the number of examinations and not to the number of seafarers examined. While some of the increase has come from the issue of a larger number of certificates with durations of less than two years there has also been
- some growth in the number of examinations. In part this continues to arise from the increasing numbers of medicals done for the commercial yachting sector. It is also apparent that, because they trust the assessment process, some employers for instance in the growing offshore wind farm sector are requiring these medicals for workers who are outside formal scope of the Medical Examination Regulations.
- 3. The number of restricted certificates has remained relatively constant, as have the numbers failed either temporarily or permanently.

4. There have been few remarkable trends in the pattern of conditions reported. Last year I noted a marked increase in diabetes cases. This upward trend is continuing, as is the increase in those who are issued with time limited or restricted certificates because of obesity. The toll from these two conditions in terms of subsequent heart disease can be expected to rise in future. Much of the diabetes seen is a consequence of obesity and there remains a reluctance on the part of many seafarers and their employers to take this risk seriously.

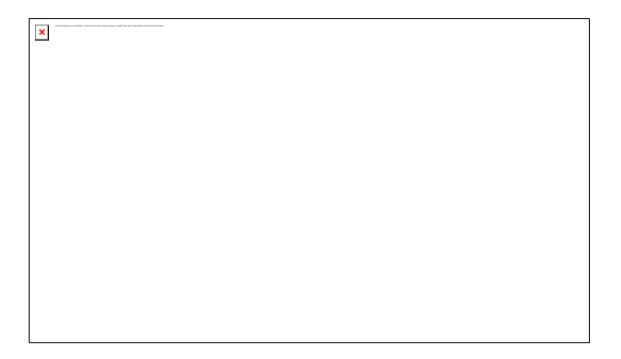
The relatively high numbers of infections and tuberculosis reported in 2008 now appear to have resulted from incorrect coding of old or latent conditions by a few Approved Doctors. A high frequency of urinary abnormalities and infections in one crewing country is being investigated.

5. The number and pattern of cases seen by referees remains relatively constant with heart disease, deafness and vision the commonest reasons for referral.

 New medical fitness standards were introduced in January 2010; see Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1822. These have associated guidance for Approved Doctors that provides additional information and guides to assist consistent decision taking.

These revised standards take account of changes to diagnosis and treatment and, for some conditions, will enable seafarers to remain working at sea or to return to duty sooner than was the case before. These changes will mean that statistics for 2010 will have a different basis and so the current report closes a series compiled from comparable data from 2003-2009.

Tim Carter
Chief Medical Adviser
UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency
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### Produced by:

Seafarer Safety & Health Branch Maritime & Coastguard Agency Bay 1/29 Spring Place 105 Commercial Road Southampton SO15 1EG

Tel: + (44) 02380 329 380 Fax: + (44) 02380 329 251