the sector. Alternatively, if the UK value of 1.8 person dives per dive is used, then rates of 1 in 32,400 and 1 in 45,000 dives for serious incidents and DCI respectively would be generated.

There is great importance attached to incident rates as they can influence insurance premiums as well as be useful for informing employers as to what the acceptable levels of risk are for a specific at-work activity. Whereas there may be national schemes to collate data, these may be incomplete, or even if they are complete they are obviously infrequently published. Collectively assessing the three reports has demonstrated the potential value of evaluating national trends within an international context. Perhaps it may be too optimistic to believe that this approach could lead to an international database for scientific diving with a standard reporting format. But then, when you consider the statistic-driven mentality of the scientist, who knows?

References


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The Editor’s offering

One of the problems that has dogged epidemiological studies of diving safety is knowing accurately the incidence or prevalence of the matter at hand, be it fatalities, decompression sickness, etc. Assembling such data for scientific diving from three international sources in a single issue of the Journal was a unique opportunity. In place of my usual, frivolous editorial, Martin Sayer has provided commentary on the papers from the Australian Institute of Marine Sciences and the Smithsonian in the USA as well as his own UK data.

Front cover photograph by George Steinmetz, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution

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