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Review

Nitrogen Narcosis In Diving

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Excerpt

Nitrogen narcosis is a change in consciousness, neuromuscular function, and behavior brought on by breathing compressed inert gasses. It has also been called depth intoxication, "narks," and rapture of the deep. Traditionally the gas involved in narcosis is nitrogen, and it is associated with dysfunction when breathed by scuba divers from their tanks containing compressed air. Other inert gasses associated with narcosis include neon, argon, krypton, and xenon, with the latter having an anesthetic effect even at sea level. Interestingly, helium does not cause inert gas narcosis and therefore, is used in deep diving as heliox (helium and oxygen mixture).

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