

Picture Yourself with The Reporter At 33,000 ft. over the ocean



Longtime friends of ours, Marijn and Laura van Erp, are seen here reading *The Bonaire Reporter* aboard their KLM flight to the Netherlands at an altitude of 33,000 ft. □

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A Shrink Studies SCUBA



Diver Response to First Dive Panic Experience Examination of Panic in 12,087 Recreational Scuba Divers

What happens when divers panic underwater? David and Lynn Colvard sent us the results of their scientific study of a large sample of certified divers:

	Males (N=2206)	Females (N=1099)
Remembered Training	82%	77%
Utilized Training	81%	73%
Another Diver Offered Help	38% *	67% *
Rapid/Uncontrolled Ascent	15%	15%
Obtained More Training	82%	80%

p < 0.0001



But is it really OK?

Among the 499 with a panic dive and rapid or uncontrolled ascent, 14 males and 9 females reported having signs or symptoms of decompression illness, and 7 males and 2 females underwent hyperbaric treatment, an insufficient number of cases for meaningful statistical analysis. One diver reported long term residual effects: numbness in the left toes after 5 years.

A history of panic prior to diving corresponded to about a two-fold relative risk of panic while diving, (2.3 for males and 1.7 for females). However, a history of panic prior to diving made little difference in the incidence of rapid or uncontrolled ascent with panic, either during or after initial training. A follow up study of the divers from this survey is currently underway. A prospective study of new dive students is needed to better determine the incidence of panic, the relative risk with a history of panic prior to diving, the incidence of rapid ascent, and the morbidity and mortality from the same, so that physicians can better advise potential dive students. □ *David F Colvard, MD and Lynn Y Colvard, PhD*



David F. Colvard, M.D., is a private psychiatrist and clinical investigator in Raleigh NC, and a divemaster. He hosts the website www.DivePsych.com which provides evidence-based information for divers on psychological and stress factors in scuba divers. □