



16th international Symposium on  
Maritime Health

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Panagiotidis

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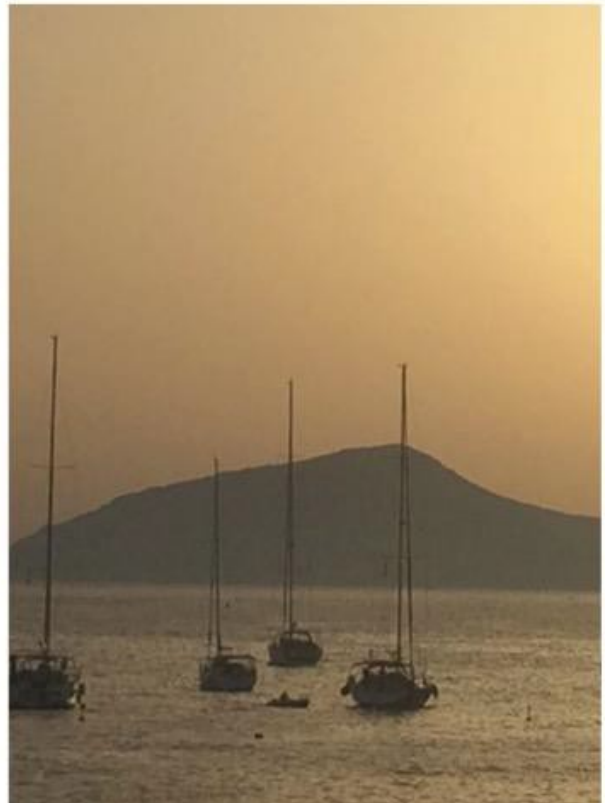
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“I swear to fulfill, to the best of my ability and judgment, this covenant: I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow” Hippocrates Oath

Dear Colleagues! Dear Friends!

I am extremely happy and honored to welcome you in Greece for the 16th International Symposium on Maritime Health.

We planned to meet here in June 2021, but the Covid-19 pandemic changed our plans. Being medics we were all at the frontlines fighting the disease. We were supporting and taking care of our seafarers who were recognized by many countries as key workers during these turbulent times.

We celebrated the 25th Anniversary of IMHA in 2022, which was organized by Dr. Rob Verbist in Antwerp, and there we realized how much we missed each other. We had many online meetings and conferences, but nothing can replace a personal meeting, a face-to-face conversation.

The ISMH16 Organizing Committee are promising you five absolutely perfect days, full of conversations, scientific discussion, fun and cultural programs. And of course, not to forget the amazing Greek cuisine.

Athens- one of the eldest cities in the world with its recorded history of around 3400 years, the historical capital of Europe. The birthplace of democracy and philosophy of western civilization. The legendary Greek sunlight and aperando galazio- the infinite blue of the sea. An open air museum. The stones which remember footprints of Pericles, Plato, Sophocles, Euripides and many others. The ancient theaters at the shadow of Acropolis where about more than 2000 years ago are playing works of Aeschylus and Aristophanes. The sacred springs at the shadow of Acropolis and ancient Asclepieion, the sanctuary built in honour of the god of medicine Asclepius and goddess of hygiene and health Hygieia. Panathenaic (Kalimarmaro) stadium where Pierre de Coubertin revived the ancient Olympic games and modern history in 2004 when Olympiad returned to the birthplace.

We are all little bit Greek, as at the beginning of our medical careers, we are reciting the Hippocrates oath.

ὄμνυμι Απόλλωνα ἰητρὸν καὶ Ἀσκληπιὸν καὶ Ὑγίαν καὶ Πανάκειαν καὶ θεοὺς πάντας τε καὶ πάσας, ἴστορας ποιεύμενος, ἐπιτελέα ποιήσειν κατὰ δύναμιν καὶ κρίσιν ἐμὴν ὄρκον τόνδε καὶ συγγραφὴν τήνδε:

Welcome to the vibrant and multifaceted city of Athens with Europe's biggest passenger port of Piraeus, to the center of European maritime industry and the cradle of the modern civilization.

Let's bring Maritime Medicine to the next level.

**Dr. Iona Denisenko**

**ISMH16 Chair**



Welcome

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the 16th International Symposium on Maritime Health (ISMH)!

Four years after the excellent 15<sup>th</sup> symposium in Hamburg, we finally meet again.

What an adventure and what a change did the four years passed create!

In the more than thirty years from the first symposium, it has become the most important gathering of maritime medical specialists in the world.

We are sure that the organizers under the lead of Dr. Ilona Denisenko, make it a wonderful experience with lots of new findings and interesting presentations along with a good atmosphere and some events that allow you to get better acquainted.

If it is your first time, please consider to become a member of the International Maritime Health Association (IMHA). The first and most representative truly international association of maritime medical professionals that was founded in 1997, during the 4<sup>th</sup> ISMH in Oslo.

Being a member of IMHA brings your work to an international level, you learn how colleagues in other parts of the world deal with the same issues and problems as you daily encounter in your work.

Also you can bring your ideas and findings to an international audience and why not to the United Nations' agencies that deal with the maritime industry. IMHA is your platform.

Non-medical professionals dealing with seafarers in any role or function are also welcome. The welfare of seafarers is more than health alone. This symposium gives you the chance to meet with all kinds of different professions that made seafarers their focus.

A very warm welcome and enjoy Athens,

Robert Verbist

IMHA president 2022-2023



**|Hello and welcome, everyone!**

As the chair of the scientific committee, I welcome you to our ISMH16.

This symposium is organized by the IMHA every other year, with an aim to bring together scientists who work in different aspects of maritime health and safety.

Thanks to the Organising Committee, that have been working tirelessly to make this event happen.

It has been some time since we last saw each other. Many things changed due to the pandemic. One of the lessons learned is that all the stakeholders should better coordinate our efforts towards serving the seafarers in more efficient and effective ways. By protecting mariners' health and wellbeing we make shipping a healthy and safe place. We make maritime an attractive profession.

The conclusions of this symposium are going to be communicated to all the actors, urging them to take the necessary actions.

I am happy to share with you that we got over 200 abstracts from all over the world. We had to make a difficult choice in the selection of abstracts because unfortunately, we could not accept all of them as oral presentations, otherwise we should sit in this room for days!! Additionally, a large number of contributions are going to be discussed as posters.

We are very fortunate to participate in sessions with studies conducted with different methods spanning on a great range of topics from autonomous shipping to gender issues. Even though, it was difficult to do field work during the recent years, there many observational studies as well, and I am sure we will enjoy lively discussions in all the sessions.

It is great to see so many familiar faces today, it is my honour to work with you all. Thank you for making this symposium a success.

With kind regards,

**Dr Despoina Andrioti Bygvraa,  
Chair of the Scientific Committee, ISMH**



*It's a real pleasure to see you all here today at the first IMHA symposium since the pandemic. A lot has happened since you all came together for the symposium in Hamburg in 2019. We've seen the industry face its biggest crisis since the second world war and as always, seafarers demonstrated their resilience and adaptability in keeping the world's supply chains open throughout the crisis. But, as you well know, seafarers paid a significant price in terms of their physical and mental health. The demand on our helplines increased three-fold at the height of the pandemic as seafarers struggled with being unable to get home to loved ones or being stranded in a foreign country, worried about whether they were safe, whether they should get vaccinated or whether they would survive yet another month at sea. Like all the welfare organisations ISWAN did its best to provide frontline support to seafarers and their families and we're proud of what was achieved working closely with our partners in the maritime health world. The pandemic has passed and we have returned to some sort of normality but what have we learnt in the process? From ISWAN's perspective, the biggest lesson is that partnership works. It works because it makes best use of all of our talents and achieves much more than we can do alone. ISWAN has been working with IMHA since long before I began in this role, learning from each other's work and collaborating on the development of health and wellbeing resources for seafarers. I look forward to further collaboration as ISWAN develops its strategy in the coming years because let's face it, we all have the same objective – good health and wellbeing for all seafarers. So enjoy the symposium and I look forward to speaking with as many of you as I can!*

*Simon Grainge*

*Chief Executive*

*International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN)*

### DISEASES OF THE CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM AS A CAUSE OF PARTIAL OR COMPLETE UNFITNESS OF SEAFARERS TO PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

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**Introduction.** Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is still one of the leading reasons for not being allowed to sea voyage.

The factors that contribute to the loss of professional fitness are considered to be the early development of CVD in seafarers, which is ahead of the average age in the population, the tendency of seafarers to conceal the initial stages of CVD, the insufficient ability to control blood pressure, sugar, lipid levels and regular use of drugs during the voyage period. **Purpose.** To study the structure of seafarer's CVD morbidity, which led for recognizing a sailor as partially or completely unfit to work at sea. **Materials and methods.** A descriptive retrospective nosological study based on materials from the *Vivamed* Medical Center (Odessa, Ukraine). The medical records of sailors who were observed for CVD and subsequently found unfit to continue working in the Navy were studied. The work does not include cases when a seafarer was declared unfit for other reasons (injuries, intoxication), etc., or changed jobs before being declared unfit. The data from 2017 to 2020 were analyzed. **Results and discussion.** Under dispensary observation there were 728 CVD seafarers. 498 (68%) persons were recognized as unsuitable. Reasons for follow-up were: - periodic or persistent increase in blood pressure in the form of arterial hypertension - 525 sailors; - atherosclerosis with the development of cardiosclerosis, arrhythmias, coronary heart disease - 189 sailors; - isolated arrhythmias, such as WPW syndrome, - 14 sailors. The reasons for recognizing sailors as unfit were: - arterial hypertension - 349 sailors; - ischemic heart disease - 149 sailors. All seafarers declared unfit had at least two complications/comorbidities in addition to the underlying disease. The most common complications were: - heart failure (HF) - 424 cases; - IHD or arterial hypertension as a second diagnosis - 115 cases; - cardiosclerosis - 109 cases; - obesity - 115 cases; - organic changes in the heart (dilation of cavities, damage to valves, etc.) - 39 cases. Coronary artery disease almost immediately led to the recognition of a sailor as unfit. This is due both to the severity of the diagnosis and to the fact that sailors with initial signs of coronary artery disease were observed under a "diagnosis-mask" - atherosclerosis of the coronary vessels, arrhythmia, etc., which, after the diagnosis of coronary artery disease was established, passed into the category of complications. A significant number of cases of heart failure are caused by the formal interpretation of cardiac ultrasound data against the background of diagnosed hypertension or coronary artery disease in the absence of clinically significant signs of cardiac weakness. Among the observations studied, there were cases when the HF established in this way after treatment was not confirmed either by clinical signs, or by functional tests, or by repeated ultrasound examination.

**Keywords:** Cardiovascular pathology, medical professional fitness examination, reason for not being allowed to sea voyage