

Revocation and Determination
of
Statement of Principles
concerning
DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

ICD-9-CM CODES: 296.2, 296.3, 300.4, 311

Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986

1. The Repatriation Medical Authority under subsection **196B(2)** of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the Act):
 - (a) revokes Instrument No.65 of 1996, and Instrument No.181 of 1996; and
 - (b) determines in their place the following Statement of Principles.

Kind of injury, disease or death

2. (a) This Statement of Principles is about **depressive disorder** and **death from depressive disorder**.
- (b) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, “**depressive disorder**” is defined as:
 - (A) the presence of major depressive disorder, dysthymic disorder or depression not otherwise specified where:
 - (i) major depressive disorder is either a single episode or recurrent episode as defined in DSM-IV; and
 - (ii) dysthymic disorder, as defined in DSM-IV, is a chronic mood disturbance, of at least two years duration, involving depressed mood, or loss of interest or pleasure, with manifestation of the symptoms used to diagnose major depression such as

- neurovegetative signs, social withdrawal, cognitive impairment and suicidal ideation; and
- (iii) depression not otherwise specified, such as minor depressive disorder and recurrent brief depressive disorder, as defined in DSM-IV, includes disorders with depressive features that do not meet the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for other specific mood disorders,

attracting ICD-9-CM code 296.2, 296.3, 300.4 or 311.

Basis for determining the factors

- 3. The Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that **depressive disorder and death from depressive disorder** can be related to relevant service rendered by veterans, members of Peacekeeping Forces, or members of the Forces.

Factors that must be related to service

- 4. Subject to clause 6, at least one of the factors set out in clause 5 must be related to any relevant service rendered by the person.

Factors

- 5. The factors that must as a minimum exist before it can be said that a reasonable hypothesis has been raised connecting **depressive disorder** or **death from depressive disorder** with the circumstances of a person's relevant service are:
 - (a) being a prisoner of war before the clinical onset of depressive disorder; or
 - (b) experiencing a severe psychosocial stressor or stressors within the two years immediately before the clinical onset of depressive disorder; or
 - (c) having a clinically significant psychiatric condition within the two years immediately before the clinical onset of depressive disorder; or
 - (d) having a major illness or injury within the two years immediately before the clinical onset of depressive disorder; or
 - (e) suffering from chronic pain of at least six months duration at the time of the clinical onset of depressive disorder; or

- (f) experiencing a severe psychosocial stressor or stressors within the two years immediately before the clinical worsening of depressive disorder; or
- (g) having a major illness or injury within the two years immediately before the clinical worsening of depressive disorder; or
- (h) having a clinically significant psychiatric condition within the two years immediately before the clinical worsening of depressive disorder; or
- (j) suffering from chronic pain of at least six months duration at the time of the clinical worsening of depressive disorder; or
- (k) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for depressive disorder.

Factors that apply only to material contribution or aggravation

6. Paragraphs **5(f) to 5(k)** apply only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, depressive disorder where the person's depressive disorder was suffered or contracted before or during (but not arising out of) the person's relevant service; paragraph 8(1)(e), 9(1)(e), 70(5)(d) or 70(5A)(d) of the Act refers.

Inclusion of Statements of Principles

7. In this Statement of Principles if a relevant factor applies and that factor includes an injury or disease in respect of which there is a Statement of Principles then the factors in that last mentioned Statement of Principles apply in accordance with the terms of that Statement of Principles.

Other definitions

8. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles:

“clinically significant” means sufficient to warrant ongoing management, which may involve regular visits (for example, at least monthly), to a psychiatrist, clinical psychologist or General Practitioner;

“chronic pain” means continuous or almost continuous pain, which may or may not be ameliorated by analgesic medication and which is of a level to cause interference with usual work or leisure activities or activities of daily living;

“death from depressive disorder” in relation to a person includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person's depressive disorder;

“DSM-IV” means the fourth edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*;

“ICD-9-CM code” means a number assigned to a particular kind of injury or disease in the Australian Version of The International Classification of Diseases, 9th revision, Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM), effective date of 1 July 1996, copyrighted by the National Coding Centre, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney, NSW, and having ISBN 0 642 24447 2;

“major illness or injury” means a serious illness or injury, that is life-threatening, or seriously disabling;

“psychiatric condition” means any Axis 1 disorder of mental health that attracts a diagnosis under DSM-IV;

“relevant service” means:

- (a) operational service; or
- (b) peacekeeping service; or
- (c) hazardous service;

“severe psychosocial stressor” means an identifiable occurrence that evokes feelings of substantial distress in an individual, for example, being shot at, death or serious injury of a close friend or relative, assault (including sexual assault), severe illness or injury, experiencing a loss such as divorce or separation, loss of employment, major financial problems or legal problems;

“terminal event” means the proximate or ultimate cause of death and includes:

- a) pneumonia;
- b) respiratory failure;
- c) cardiac arrest;
- d) circulatory failure; or
- e) cessation of brain function.

Application

9. This Instrument applies to all matters to which section 120A of the Act applies.

Dated this *Third* day of *September* 1998

The Common Seal of the)
Repatriation Medical Authority)
was affixed to this instrument)
in the presence of:)

KEN DONALD
CHAIRMAN