

The Divers Day

Compared to other events of the week, the Divers Day was more addressed to the general public. This time the audience was not only composed of doctors and professionals, but also of all those who animate the diving community: teachers, guides, managers of dive operations and clubs, journalists and fans. Because the goal of every DAN Day is to speak directly to the divers, listening to their doubts and questions, and trying to provide real answers.

The program

Prof. David Elliott, diving medicine expert and consultant to the Royal Navy, opened the lectures. Prof. Elliott first gave a definition of diving, focusing his attention on commercial and recreational diving. He talked about inherent risks and safety rules, trying to go beyond stereotypes and identifying common mistakes, also through the use of pictures and funny cartoons. 100% British humor and aplomb...

Prof. Costantino Balestra continued the program, showing the most recent studies conducted by DAN research. Among them, the relationship between muscle contractions and respiratory rate, and the so-called "comets", a name given to traces indicating the presence of water in the breath-hold divers' lungs (and therefore the possibility of pulmonary edema). Prof. Balestra lastly remembered the figure of Patrick Musimu, apnea recordman, who recently passed away. Patrick was a true athlete, who contributed significantly to research conducted by the DAN Europe team in the Brussels laboratories.

Dr. Ulrich Van Laak, our director for Germany, Austria and Hungary, continued with the subject "In-Water Recompression for diving emergencies in remote locations," a controversial subject but one of great relevance and interest.

Dan Orr, President of DAN America, concluded the morning program with the subject "Diver Fatalities: How Good Divers Get Into Bad Trouble". A long series of data related to accidents, analysis of possible causes and consequences, practical advices on how to stay out of trouble underwater. He delivered to the public a "personal safety envelope" in which one can place experience, training, qualifications, technology, positive attitude.

After the lunch break, Petar Denoble, another guest from the DAN America, spoke about accidents and technical diving. Dr. Jacek Kot, one of the local organisers (DAN Polska), explained to the audience some aspects of the role of oxygen in decompression.

Before the coffee break, Guy Thomas has shown in detail what DAN does and why it is so important to join the Divers Alert Network. This was an occasion to remember another friend of DAN who recently died: Witold Smilowski, our training coordinator for Poland. Michal Kosut, DAN Instructor Trainer and close friend of Witold, was there on behalf of the Smilowski family and received a glass sculpture dedicated to "Witek".

Francois Burman, executive director of DAN Southern Africa The speech of Dr. Van Laak Dan Orr, President of DAN America Francois Burman, from DAN Southern Africa, spoke about a series of DAN programmes aimed at **improving safety of hyperbaric chambers**. Among these, RC APP (addressed to hyperbaric centers) and ChAtts & ChOps (addressed to staff). So far about 140 hyperbaric chambers in the world have been visited, and 101 among them have been assessed and have received specific advices on safety.

Prof. Alessandro Marroni closed the DAN Divers Day with a comprehensive report: scientific research and participated science, collaboration with other research institutions, practical tips on diving safety. Because, as mentioned, this is the spirit of the Divers Day: to speak clearly to divers and provide them with "take-

home messages". Information that are reliable, comprehensive and valuable.