

# REVOKE

## Revocation and Determination

of

## Statement of Principles concerning

# THORACIC SPONDYLOSIS

ICD CODES: 721.2, 721.41, 722.51

## *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.103 of 1995, Instrument No.332 of 1995, and Instrument No.356 of 1995; and
  - (b) determines the following Statement of Principles.

### **Kind of injury, disease or death**

2. (a) This Statement of Principles is about **thoracic spondylosis** and **death from thoracic spondylosis**.
  - (b) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, “**thoracic spondylosis**” means degenerative changes affecting the thoracic vertebrae and/or intervertebral discs, causing local pain and stiffness and/or symptoms and signs of thoracic cord or thoracic nerve root compression, attracting ICD code 721.2, 721.41 or 722.51.

### **Basis for determining the factors**

3. The Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that **thoracic spondylosis and death from thoracic spondylosis** 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, the factors set out in at least one of the paragraphs 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 **thoracic spondylosis** or **death from thoracic spondylosis** with the circumstances of a person's relevant service are:
  - (a) having been a prisoner of war; or
  - (b) contracting a significant inflammatory joint disease in the thoracic spine before the clinical onset of thoracic spondylosis; or
  - (c) suffering an intra-articular fracture of the thoracic spine before the clinical onset of thoracic spondylosis; or
  - (d) having a malalignment of the thoracic spine before the clinical onset of thoracic spondylosis; or
  - (e) suffering a depositional joint disease in the thoracic spine before the clinical onset of thoracic spondylosis; or
  - (f) suffering a trauma to the thoracic spine which has resulted in permanent ligamentous instability before the clinical onset of thoracic spondylosis; or
  - (g) suffering a trauma to the thoracic spine before the clinical onset of thoracic spondylosis; or
  - (h) suffering a thoracic intervertebral disc prolapse before the clinical onset of thoracic spondylosis at the level of the intervertebral disc prolapse; or
  - (j) suffering a trauma to the thoracic spine which has resulted in permanent ligamentous instability before the clinical worsening of thoracic spondylosis; or
  - (k) suffering a trauma to the thoracic spine before the clinical worsening of thoracic spondylosis.

## **Factors that apply only to material contribution or aggravation**

6. Paragraphs **5(j) to 5(k)** apply only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, thoracic spondylosis where the person's thoracic spondylosis 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.

## **Other definitions**

7. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles:

**“depositional joint disease”** means gout, pseudogout, haemochromatosis, Wilson's disease or ochronosis;

**“ICD 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;

**“inflammatory joint disease”** means a disease affecting a joint or joints where there is swelling, inflammation and pain that persisted for at least five days;

**“intra-articular fracture”** means a fracture involving the articular surface of a joint;

**“malalignment”** means the displacement out of line resulting as the effect of underlying muscle weakness, deformity of other joints, joint dysplasia or disparate leg length;

**“relevant service”** means:

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

**“thoracic intervertebral disc prolapse”** means protrusion, herniation or rupture of an intervertebral disc of the thoracic spine, causing local pain and stiffness, attracting ICD code 722.11, 722.31 or 722.72;

**“trauma to the thoracic spine”** means an injury to the thoracic spine caused by the force of an extraneous physical or mechanical agent that causes the development, within 24 hours of the injury being sustained, of acute symptoms and signs of pain, tenderness, and altered mobility or range of movement of that part of the spine, and where such acute

symptoms and signs last for a period of at least one week immediately after the injury occurs, unless medical intervention has occurred. Where medical intervention for the injury has occurred (for example splinting, corticosteroid injection, surgery), and there is evidence relating to the extent of injury and treatment, such evidence may be considered;

**“trauma to the thoracic spine which has resulted in permanent ligamentous instability”** means abnormal mobility and instability of the thoracic spine due to ligamentous injury caused by the force of an extraneous physical or mechanical agent, and is characterised by the regular recurrence of episodes of pain and/or tenderness affecting the thoracic spine.

### **Application**

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

Dated this *Ninth* day of *December* 1996

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

KEN DONALD  
CHAIRMAN