

Revocation and Determination
of
Statement of Principles
concerning
MACULAR DEGENERATION

ICD CODES: 362.50 - 362.53

Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986

1. The Repatriation Medical Authority under subsection **196B(3)** of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (the Act):
 - (a) revokes Instrument No.349 of 1995; and
 - (b) determines the following Statement of Principles.

Kind of injury, disease or death

2. (a) This Statement of Principles is about **macular degeneration** and **death from macular degeneration**.

(b) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, **“macular degeneration”** means a primary degenerative disorder of the macula, which is that part of the retina centred on the fovea in which the ganglion cell layer is more than one cell thick and which serves central and colour vision, attracting an ICD code in the range 362.50 - 362.53.

Note: This definition includes the conditions of age-related macular degeneration and cystoid macular degeneration. Degeneration of the optic disc, macular cyst, hole, or pseudohole, toxic maculopathy, drusen, peripheral retinal degeneration and hereditary retinal dystrophies are excluded from this definition.

Basis for determining the factors

3. On the sound medical-scientific evidence available, the Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that it is more probable than not that

macular degeneration and death from macular degeneration can be related to relevant service rendered by veterans 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 exist before it can be said that, on the balance of probabilities, **macular degeneration** or **death from macular degeneration** is connected with the circumstances of a person's relevant service are:
 - (a) for age-related macular degeneration only, smoking at least 15 pack-years of cigarettes, or the equivalent thereof in other tobacco products, before the clinical onset of macular degeneration, and, where smoking has ceased, the clinical onset has occurred within 20 years of cessation; or
 - (b) inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for macular degeneration.

Factors that apply only to material contribution or aggravation

6. Paragraph 5(b) applies only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, macular degeneration where the person's macular degeneration was suffered or contracted before or during (but not arising out of) the person's relevant service; paragraph 8(1)(e), 9(1)(e) or 70(5)(d) of the Act refers.

Other definitions

7. For the purposes of this Statement of Principles:

“age-related macular degeneration” means a primary disorder of the macular area of the retina that is most often clinically apparent after 50 years of age and includes:

(i) dry or nonexudative age-related macular degeneration (geographic atrophy of the retinal pigment epithelial in the absence of neovascular age-related macular degeneration); or

(ii) wet or neovascular or exudative age-related macular degeneration (retinal pigment epithelial detachment, haemorrhages and/or disciform scars in the macular area),

attracting ICD code 362.50, 362.51 or 362.52;

“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;

“pack-year” means 7 300 cigarettes, or 1 460 cigars, or 7.3 kg of pipe tobacco;

“relevant service” means:

- (a) eligible war service (other than operational service); or
- (b) defence service (other than hazardous service).

Application

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

Dated this **Twentieth** day of **February**
1997

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

KEN DONALD
CHAIRMAN