



Australian Government
Repatriation Medical Authority

Statement of Principles
concerning
POLYMYALGIA RHEUMATICA
(Reasonable Hypothesis)
(No. 19 of 2016)

The Repatriation Medical Authority determines the following Statement of Principles under subsection 196B(2) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.

Dated 4 March 2016

The Common Seal of the
Repatriation Medical Authority
was affixed to this instrument
at the direction of:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Saunders'.

Professor Nicholas Saunders AO
Chairperson

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1 Name

This is the Statement of Principles concerning *polymyalgia rheumatica (Reasonable Hypothesis)* (No. 19 of 2016).

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on 4 April 2016.

3 Authority

This instrument is made under subsection 196B(2) of the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.

4 Revocation

The Statement of Principles concerning polymyalgia rheumatica No. 23 of 2008 made under subsection 196B(2) of the VEA is revoked.

5 Application

This instrument applies to a claim to which section 120A of the VEA or section 338 of the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* applies.

6 Definitions

The terms defined in the Schedule 1 - Dictionary have the meaning given when used in this instrument.

7 Kind of injury, disease or death to which this Statement of Principles relates

- (1) This Statement of Principles is about polymyalgia rheumatica and death from polymyalgia rheumatica.

Meaning of polymyalgia rheumatica

- (2) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, polymyalgia rheumatica means:
- (a) a clinical syndrome consisting of bilateral aching and stiffness persisting for at least one month involving the neck or torso, shoulder or proximal regions of the arms, or the pelvic girdle; a rapid relief of symptoms in response to corticosteroids; and with an erythrocyte sedimentation rate greater than 40 mm/hour or systemic symptoms such as malaise, fatigue and a low-grade fever, occurring in the absence of other diseases capable of causing the musculoskeletal system symptoms; and
 - (b) excludes polymyalgia rheumatica coexistent with giant cell arteritis.

- (3) While polymyalgia rheumatica attracts ICD-10-AM code M35.3, in applying this Statement of Principles the meaning of polymyalgia rheumatica is that given in subsection (2).
- (4) For subsection (3), a reference to an ICD-10-AM code is a reference to the code assigned to a particular kind of injury or disease in *The International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision, Australian Modification (ICD-10-AM)*, Ninth Edition, effective date of 1 July 2015, copyrighted by the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority, ISBN 978-1-76007-020-5.

Death from polymyalgia rheumatica

- (5) For the purposes of this Statement of Principles, polymyalgia rheumatica, in relation to a person, includes death from a terminal event or condition that was contributed to by the person's polymyalgia rheumatica.

Note: *terminal event* is defined in the Schedule 1 – Dictionary.

8 Basis for determining the factors

The Repatriation Medical Authority is of the view that there is sound medical-scientific evidence that indicates that polymyalgia rheumatica and death from polymyalgia rheumatica can be related to relevant service rendered by veterans, members of Peacekeeping Forces, or members of the Forces under the VEA, or members under the MRCA.

Note: *relevant service* is defined in the Schedule 1 – Dictionary.

9 Factor that must exist

The factor that must as a minimum exist before it can be said that a reasonable hypothesis has been raised connecting polymyalgia rheumatica or death from polymyalgia rheumatica with the circumstances of a person's relevant service is inability to obtain appropriate clinical management for polymyalgia rheumatica.

10 Relationship to service

The existence in a person of the factor referred to in section 9 applies only to material contribution to, or aggravation of, polymyalgia rheumatica where the person's polymyalgia rheumatica was suffered or contracted before or during (but did not arise out of) the person's relevant service.

Schedule 1 - Dictionary

Note: See Section 6

1 Definitions

In this instrument:

MRCA means the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004*.

polymyalgia rheumatica—see subsection 7(2).

relevant service means:

- (a) operational service under the VEA;
- (b) peacekeeping service under the VEA;
- (c) hazardous service under the VEA;
- (d) British nuclear test defence service under the VEA;
- (e) warlike service under the MRCA; or
- (f) non-warlike service under the MRCA.

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

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

VEA means the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*.