



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Veterans' Affairs**

**Policy Development Branch**

## SOP Bulletin No. 217

16 November 2020

**THE FOLLOWING RMA SOPS TAKE EFFECT ON 30 NOVEMBER, 2020**

<b>New SOPs</b>	<b>Toxic vestibulopathy</b>
<b>Revocations &amp; Replacements</b>	<b>Peripheral artery disease Adhesive capsulitis of the shoulder Spinal adhesive arachnoiditis Conjunctivitis Dengue virus infection Malignant neoplasm of the cervix Photocontact dermatitis Tinnitus Otitic barotrauma Inflammatory bowel disease</b>
<b>Amendments</b>	<b>Intervertebral disc prolapse</b>

## NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

### Toxic vestibulopathy

**New – 88 & 89 of 2020**

- This new SOP covers damage to the inner ear or vestibular nerve by chemicals, resulting in vestibular symptoms (e.g. vertigo, dizziness, disequilibrium, nystagmus (eye jerking), blurred vision with head movement, nausea, and vomiting),
- The SOP factors cover drugs and chemical agents (and include an RH only factor for cumulative exposure to jet fuel).

### Peripheral artery disease

**Revocation – 70 & 71 of 2020**

Replaces 23 & 24 of 2012, as amended

- The name of the SOP has been changed, from atherosclerotic peripheral vascular disease.
- SOP coverage is effectively unchanged, but:
  - There is a new clarification (in a definition note) that atherosclerotic disease of the iliac arteries (including the internal iliac arteries) is covered. [Aortic atherosclerotic disease remains covered by the separate SOP for non-aneurysmal aortic atherosclerotic disease.]
  - Although clinically significant disease is still required, this may now be evidenced by either clinical manifestations being present, or by the condition warranting medical treatment (new).
- The smoking and passive smoking factors have been updated to the current format, with changes to dose (reductions) and latency requirements.
- There are new factors for:
  - inability to undertake any physical activity > three METs (RH and onset only), (previous RH worsening factor retained);
  - HIV infection; depression; obesity; autoimmune disease; and, inability to consume a minimum level of fruit and vegetables, (all RH only, onset and worsening); and
  - tyrosine kinase inhibitor therapy (anti-cancer/leukaemia drugs) (RH & BOP, onset and worsening).

**Adhesive capsulitis of the shoulder****Revocation – 72 & 73 of 2020**

Replaces 7 &amp; 8 of 2012

- The definition has been reformatted but SOP coverage is unchanged.
- There are new factors for:
  - A prior surgical procedure in the region of the shoulder (RH & BOP, onset and worsening);
  - Dyslipidaemia, and, drugs (phenobarbital or primidone) (RH only, onset and worsening).
- Factors have been removed for: immobilisation; myocardial infarction; pulmonary TB; and chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

**Spinal adhesive arachnoiditis****Revocation – 74 & 75 of 2020**

Replaces 116 &amp; 117 of 2011

- The definition has been reformatted but is effectively unchanged.
- The previous myelogram factors have been reorganised. There are now separate factors for oil-based and specified water-based radiological contrast agents.
- There is a new factor for injection of thorotrast (a now obsolete radiological contrast agent – last used in the 1950s).
- Factors have been removed for dural puncture and for an epidural catheter – these are effectively covered by other factors.
- An RH worsening factor for Depo Medrol injection (intrathecal) has been removed (the corresponding onset factor is retained).
- Viral infection has been removed from the factor covering specified infections of the spine.

**Conjunctivitis****Revocation – 76 & 77 of 2020**

Replaces 1 &amp; 2 of 2012

- There are new factors for: conditions that cause chronic dry eyes; systemic drugs (both a specified list and a generic factor); and, therapeutic radiation involving the eye.
- A previous factor covering a list of conditions has been broken up into separate factors for: autoimmune diseases; graft vs host disease; and, diabetes mellitus. Vitamin A and B deficiencies, previously covered in the list, have been removed.

**Dengue virus infection****Revocation – 78 & 79 of 2020**

Replaces 13 &amp; 14 of 2012

- There has been a name change for this SOP, from dengue fever. The SOP still requires an illness and does not cover asymptomatic infection.
- The new definition updates the terminology used with this disease. “Dengue with warning signs” and “severe dengue” are now used for complicated forms of dengue, in place of the older terms “dengue haemorrhagic fever” and “dengue shock syndrome”.
- The sole causal factor is for being exposed to the virus. The associated definition for virus exposure has been updated and expanded to cover geographic location and sexual transmission.

**Malignant neoplasm of the cervix****Revocation – 80 & 81 of 2020**

Replaces 39 &amp; 40 of 2012

- The definition for the human papilloma virus (HPV) infection factor now has three additional HPV sub-types.
- The smoking factor now applies only to squamous cell carcinoma and the smoking dose has been increased.
- In addition to the previous “being prevented from accessing clinical screening” factor, there is a new factor for “being prevented from accessing appropriate treatment for cervical precancerous lesions”.

**Photocontact dermatitis****Revocation – 82 & 83 of 2020**

Replaces 108 &amp; 109 of 2011

- The definition has been updated but SOP coverage is unchanged.
- For phototoxic agents exposure can now have been up to 48 hours before clinical onset (previously 6 hours).
- For photoallergic agents exposure has to have been within the 5 days before onset. The role of sensitisation (an initial exposure that primes the skin to have an allergic reaction on later re-exposure) is acknowledged in notes that accompany the factor, but the previous SOP factor that covered a sensitising exposure any time before onset has been removed.

**Tinnitus****Revocation – 84 & 85 of 2020**

Replaces 33 &amp; 34 of 2012, as amended

- The SOP definition now requires tinnitus to have persisted for at least three months.
- For the drugs factor there are additions to the specified list, particularly in the RH SOP. There is also a new generic drug factor.
- The previous specified disease or injury factor has been split into multiple separate factors.
- The previous specified infections factor has also been split into a number of separate factors.
- There are new RH only factors for: concussion or moderate to severe traumatic brain injury; trigeminal neuralgia; smoking; passive smoking; and, anxiety disorder or depressive disorder.
- There are new RH and BOP factors for: an explosive blast; lightning; and, temporomandibular disorder.
- Migraine and tension-type headache are covered by a new RH factor, whereas for BOP the factor is restricted to migraine with brainstem aura.
- All new factors are for both onset and worsening.

**Otitic barotrauma****Revocation – 86 & 87 of 2020**

Replaces 35 &amp; 36 of 2012, as amended

- Previous factors for breathing 100% oxygen and having eustachian tube dysfunction have been removed. [Hyperbaric oxygen therapy and diving using 100% oxygen are still covered by the change in barometric pressure factor.]
- A reminder: Limited streamlining applies for otitic barotrauma claims. See CLIK MRCA policy manual, section [3.4.5.1](#).

**Inflammatory bowel disease****Revocation – 90 & 91 of 2020**

Replaces 19 &amp; 20 of 2012, as amended

- The definition has been reformatted. 'Crohn's disease' has become 'Crohn disease'.
- The various smoking (Crohn dis.)/ceasing smoking (ulcerative colitis) and passive smoking factors have been updated, with changes to latency and dose in some factors.
- There are changes to the drugs factors, including a now separate factor for NSAIDs and a new factor (for Crohn disease, onset and RH only) for having multiple courses of antibiotics.
- The oral contraceptive pill factor, previously for onset only (RH & BOP), now also applies for worsening, for RH only.
- The category stressor factors (1A, 1B & 2), previously RH only worsening factors, now apply for onset (RH only) and BOP (worsening only).
- The previous RH only, worsening only, depressive disorder factor now also covers anxiety disorder and has been extended to onset for RH only.
- There are new factors, for Crohn disease and RH only, for:
  - obesity; low fibre intake; high sucrose (sugar) intake; (all onset only) and,
  - inability to exercise > 4 METs (onset and worsening).
- There is a new RH only, worsening only factor for undergoing faecal microbiota transplantation.
- A BOP worsening factor for bowel infection has been removed (retained in RH).

- The amendment corrects an error in the BOP SOP. In factor 9(9), concerning bacterial infection of a disc, the word “worsening” has been replaced with “onset”.

**Contact for this bulletin:**

Dr Jon Kelley

X470412