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Optimizing the Danish Maritime Tele medical Assistance service – A study of evacuations at sea from 2004-2014

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Abstract

Background
Since 1980 Radio Medical Denmark (RMD) has provided Tele Medical Assistance Service (TMAS). However, despite almost 35 years of experience, only limited scientific documentation of the outcome of the TMAS service exist. It is thus unknown if the app. 1100 yearly contacts to RMD lead to a fit-for-duty certificate or a notification of illness. Moreover, RMD request approx. 60 evacuations every year. However, little is known if they lead to survival, long-term sickness leave or death. It is also unknown how Denmark manages their TMAS system compared to other seafaring nations.

Objectives
The aim of this project is to optimize the quality of TMAS and to evaluate if the services provided are at an internationally comparable and high level. The project will explore if the current preventive initiatives are sufficient, if the acute emergency force is the most effective, if the crew is sufficiently trained, and if the routinely collected case knowledge, can be collected and used in a better way. In addition, the project strives to conduct an International benchmarking study comparing TMAS between countries with comparable merchant fleets.

Method
In order to measure the TMAS outcomes and to outline measurable criteria – enabling a continuous evaluation and optimizing of the efforts - there is a strong need for merger of different registers. The main focus is thus to establish a TMAS register – based on data from five different registers. Quantitative analyses of this register data as well as qualitative analysis based on patient journals and interviews with crew medics and trainers will be conducted. The international benchmarking will be conducted based on a Delphi study.

Results and conclusion
The project started in November 2014 and will continue until 2017. This point in time data collection is in process. Results concerning characteristics of evacuation cases from 2004-2014 is expected to be ready for presentation summer 2015.