

Assignment 1:

Asthma in the Offshore Environment

Name:

Date:

1. Describe the underlying pathology in asthma (**3 points**)
2. Asthmatics have a wide range of factors which may precipitate attacks – list some of the most common (**5 points**)
3. One of the crew, a 28 year old roustabout has come to the Sick Bay complaining of cough and wheeze. You know that he has a history of mild asthma since childhood and he always declares his Ventolin inhaler at the beginning of each trip but you have never known him to actually need it. What are the main points you would wish to cover in taking a history? (**5 points**)

4. Outline the essentials of your examination and investigation (**5 points**)

The results of your initial history and examination are:

- *His symptoms came on 36 hours ago following working alongside a welder doing a lot of cutting work and are increasing in severity*
- *He is now short of breath on mild exertion –climbing 20 steps*
- *He is using accessory muscles of respiration, has air entry over all areas but there is a widespread expiratory wheeze.*
- *Pulse is 90, Respiratory Rate 20, Peak flow 60% of expected.*

5. What is your estimate of the level of severity of this attack and what is your initial treatment? (**4 points**)

Unfortunately, your treatment has not helped the patient and in fact his condition seems to be deteriorating significantly.

6. What signs and symptoms would alert you to his worsening condition?
(4 points)

7. How will your treatment change in view of this deterioration? What additional drugs might the Topside Dr advise you to use? **(6 points)**