

## THE CURRENT STATUS OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE EPIDEMIOLOGY IN THE GERMAN NAVY

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Communicable diseases are again becoming of major importance, exemplified by the rise in tuberculosis, AIDS and Diphtheria. The growing significance of the epidemiology of communicable diseases is recognised in Germany and in the Armed Forces. The German Armed Forces have become more involved in international activities like Partnership For Peace and UN-peacekeeping missions.

Joining these deployments to foreign countries sailors can acquire diseases which are uncommon or very rare in Germany. In the German Navy about 28,000 soldiers are in service. Sailors in the sea-going units live in special conditions which justifies special efforts in epidemiological research within the German Navy. The German Navy Institute for Maritime Medicine in Kronshagen is part of the German Navy Medical Service. Its Communicable Disease Epidemiology subunit was set up in 1997 and is integrated in the Division of Infectious and Tropical Diseases and Preventive Medicine.

The mission of the Communicable Disease Epidemiology unit is currently defined by performing international surveillance, providing preventive health recommendations for deployments and teaching of epidemiological procedures and methods. Human and financial resources are available for research about the occurrence and prevention of infectious diseases. The current processing of communicable disease data in the German Navy (and the German Armed Forces) is based on several reporting schemes and analysing health data retrospectively from medical records. The flow of information and the parties involved will be described.

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