

Respiratory symptoms and pulmonary function in O' Higgins antarctic base residents Síntomas respiratorios y función pulmonar en residentes de la base antártica O'Higgins.

Ancic,

Guzmán,

Oyarzún,

The aim was to study pulmonary function and physical capacity and their relation to respiratory symptoms among military personnel before and after one year of permanence in an Antarctic base. In 21 men aged 38 +/- 5.5 years, enquiries about smoking habits and respiratory symptoms, spirometry, bronchial provocation test and measures of aerobic capacity and peak expiratory flow were performed. After 75 days of permanence in the base, there was a significant increase in weight, exertional dyspnea appeared in 8 subjects and there was an 8.4% decrease in aerobic capacity. The bronchial provocation test was positive outdoors in 7 of the 21 staff members; when performed indoors, no subject had a positive test and in Santiago only one subject had a positive test (Chi sq $p < 0.025$). After 7.5 and 11 months of permanence, forced vital capacity decreased in 13% and no diurnal differences of peak expiratory flow were observed. In conclusion, the permanence in Antarctica may slightly affect the res