

# The Everest Files.

## THE EVEREST BASE CAMP BLOG

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MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS AT THE HIMALAYA RESCUE ASSOCIATION (HRA) TENT AT EVEREST BASE CAMP. PHOTO: MATT DICKINSON



A HELICOPTER LANDS AT BASE CAMP TO TRANSPORT A SICK CLIMBER TO HOSPITAL. PHOTO: MATT DICKINSON

## TUESDAY 26 APRIL

### HIMALAYAN RESCUE!

*The voluntary organisation that saves dozens of lives each year.*

Altitude is a killer. Thin air has terrible effects on the human body and Everest climbers have always battled to function in this demanding environment. Many get sick. Some become fatally ill.

Luckily there is help at hand. The Himalayan Rescue Association is stationed in a tent at Base Camp to offer medical assistance.

This fantastic medical charity has been operating since the early 1970s, running a series of clinics and seasonal medical bays at key villages on the way to Everest and at Base Camp itself. Their patients are westerners and Sherpa climbers alike, coming for treatment for ailments as diverse as frostbite, pneumonia and high-altitude sickness.

Of the conditions the volunteer doctors deal with, HACE and HAPE are perhaps the most deadly. These are the two forms of altitude related sickness that climbers fear the most. Water on the brain and water on the lung.

Swift diagnosis and air evacuation to lower altitudes is the only real remedy.

Volunteering for the HRA is a demanding role. The medics are on standby 24 hours a day and can be called on to deal with major traumas involving multiple casualties. In the last two years there have been tragic losses of life on the mountain. Two years ago an avalanche hit Sherpa climbers in the ice fall causing many deaths and injuries. Last year the Nepal Earthquake provoked a similar loss of life when an avalanche blast hit Base Camp. The HRA doctors found themselves at the centre of these events, working hard to save lives.

### QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION:

1. Find out some more about the HRA online. What are the main objectives of the organisation?
2. Helicopters are increasingly used to evacuate climbers. How are they paid for? Can Everest climbers get insurance for this type of eventuality?
3. Thousands of trekkers go to Everest Base Camp each year. See if you can find out with online research what percentage actually make it!





THE HRA HAS BEEN SAVING LIVES ON EVEREST SINCE 1973. **PHOTO:** MATT DICKINSON



VOLUNTEERS AT BASE CAMP ARE AMONG THE WORLD'S FOREMOST EXPERTS IN TREATING ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS (AMS). **PHOTO:** MATT DICKINSON

## Our Mission:

### Subsidized Healthcare for the Sherpa People


The Sherpa people of the Khumbu region are known as the fittest and most efficient load-lifters in the world, bearing loads on average of 93% of their bodyweight. Without the service of the cheerful and appreciative Sherpas, few could enjoy treks in the Himalayan mountains. Despite their gifts of physical fitness, the Sherpa people have an average life expectancy of only about 53 years. Factors contributing to their short lives include extreme poverty, food shortages, dangerous work, and lack of access to healthcare services.

Our volunteer physicians cover their own travel expenses to work for three months each year on a shoestring budget, while sacrificing their personal comfort and pay to generate funds to subsidize healthcare for Sherpa people. Each year, about 300 people, often suffering from illnesses, at our Everest clinic, half our patients are from the poorest regions of Nepal.

Without our clinic, many Sherpa people, who support their families, at Everest, many of them live in one of the poorest regions of Nepal.

In addition to countless donations of medical supplies, your donations cover our expenses.

**HIMALAYAN RESCUE ASSOCIATION**



THE HRA RELIES ON DONATIONS. WHY NOT START A SCHOOL FUNDRAISING PROJECT FOR THIS WORTHY CAUSE? **PHOTO:** MATT DICKINSON



THE ONLY EFFECTIVE CURE FOR AMS IS TO DESCEND QUICKLY. HELICOPTERS CAN REACH A HOSPITAL IN TWO HOURS. **PHOTO:** MATT DICKINSON