

camp. Naito was in Talkeetna by 7:30 p.m. and was observed by Robinson at 8:00 p.m. Naito required no medical treatment. (Source: Roger Robinson, Park Ranger, Denali National Park)

Analysis

This is one of several edema cases for this year. Last year, the comments on foreign climbers neglected to mention the fact that altitude is frequently a problem for them, primarily because they are compelled to move up fast due to their time schedules. (Source: J. Williamson)

FROSTBITE

Alaska, Mount McKinley

A three-member party from Seattle, Washington, flew to the Kahiltna Glacier on May 23, 1981, to climb the West Rib of Mount McKinley. On June 5 they moved to their high camp at 16,500 feet. At 8:00 a.m. on the 7th, two members, including Gary Selner (29), left for the summit. Selner began the ascent with cold feet, wearing Trappeur double boots and supergators, and had constant trouble keeping his feet warm. At 10,000 feet they encountered high winds and Selner began to have difficulty keeping warm. At 4:00 p.m. he decided to return while his partner continued on to the summit. Upon his return to the 16,500-foot camp at 6:00 p.m., Selner knew that something was wrong with his feet. On the 8th, the three climbers descended toward the West Buttress basin and Selner was able to walk on his own with frostbitten toes. Due to whiteout conditions, the party was forced to camp above 14,200 feet that night. On the 9th, they descended to 12,500 feet on the West Buttress. On June 10, Selner began to have difficulty descending. At 8,000 feet on the Kahiltna, they encountered the Denali Reconnaissance expedition led by Dr. Peter Hackett. Hackett instructed the Selner party not to descend any farther but to have Selner assisted from this point. At 8:30 p.m. the Selner party radioed out to Kahiltna base of the need for an evacuation. A NPS Mount McKinley patrol of four, led by Ranger Dave Buchanan, responded to the request and arrived at their 8,000-foot camp at 11:30 p.m. Buchanan noticed that Selner's toes were bleeding and in poor condition and suggested that they assist Selner down. At 12:30 a.m. on June 11, the five departed for Kahiltna Base pulling Selner in a sled. Seven additional climbers joined in to assist the NPS team at the base of the hill at 6,800 feet. Selner arrived in basecamp at 2:00 a.m. and was flown to Talkeetna at 8:15 a.m. by Talkeetna Air Taxi. That same day he checked into Providence Hospital in Anchorage. (Source: Roger Robinson, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

Analysis

This is similar to the Jennings case reported earlier. (Source: J. Williamson)

EXHAUSTION, CEREBRAL EDEMA, INEXPERIENCE, SELF-ADMINISTERED DRUGS

Alaska, Mount McKinley

Bob Wheeler (age unknown) was a member of the North Cascades Alpine School guided expedition to the West Buttress of Mount McKinley. The group, led by guides Alan Kearney and Tim Boyer, reached the summit late in the day on June 22. Wheeler was exhausted by the effort. He arrived at the high camp at 17,200 feet late in the evening and took 60 mg

of codeine sulfate and 30 mg of dalmene from a personal supply without telling the guides.

At noon on June 23, Kearney and Boyer reported to NPS Mountaineering Ranger Buchanan, who was in the same area, that Wheeler was really exhausted and that they thought they would wait a day to descend. Around 2:00 p.m., Buchanan observed that Wheeler could not stand without assistance and had significant coordination problems.

A radio contact was established with Dr. Drummond Rennie in Talkeetna about 1:00 p.m. and the situation was discussed. Besides motor problems, Wheeler had a bad headache and pain in his kidneys during urination. Rennie recommended immediate descent and not to "sleep on it."

The group packed immediately and departed the high camp at 6:45 p.m. NPS personnel Ralph Baldwin and Scott Gill accompanied the group down the West Buttress to help haul loads and assist in belays. Buchanan coordinated radio communication for the high camp. The group reached the fixed lines at midnight where Gill and Baldwin left to return to the high camp. Wheeler was lowered to the camp at 14,200 feet where all spent the night exhausted from the efforts.

The following day, Wheeler had not improved and late on June 24, he was taken to a lower elevation by sled. He reached Kahiltna base camp early on June 25, still without showing significant improvement, and was immediately flown to Talkeetna. He improved on the descent to Talkeetna. Several doctors en route diagnosed Wheeler as having cerebral edema. (Source: Dave Buchanan, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

Analysis

Aside from the obvious fact that guides can rarely know their clients well before they arrive, the situation encountered here points out that the problem is exacerbated when a client resorts to clandestine activities such as self-medication. Another example of this case occurred during a semester-long climbing/outdoor leadership school program this past year when a client, separated from the guides for several days, became hypothermic. The problem was not just the hypothermia, which, in fact, the clients dealt with, although it took them 36 hours; the more disconcerting aspect was that the clients did not tell the guides (who were in contact with them by radio) what was happening because they were concerned about "letting the guides and other clients down." The general point to be made is that trying to please others, especially by not informing them of your condition or by administering self-prescribed medication, may result in achieving the opposite effects from those desired. (Source: J. Williamson)

FROSTBITE, BAD WEATHER, INEXPERIENCE

Alaska, Mount McKinley

A ten-member Fantasy Ridge party, with guides Mike Covington and Steve Gall, made a successful ascent of the South Buttress on Mount McKinley. They reached the summit on June 25, 1981 and returned to their 18,000-foot high camp that afternoon. On the 26th, the party descended to a 15,500-foot camp on the South Buttress, arriving in deteriorating weather. An intense storm developed overnight, burying the party's four tents in heavy drifting snow. Round-the-clock shoveling was maintained to prevent the tents from collapsing. Snow caves were started but the heavy drifting caused them to collapse. Covington located a crevasse around midday and began work inside excavating sleeping ledges. By late