

## Communication Summary

4/29/2020

Information from: Mary Pat McKay, MD, MPH



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Summary & Factual Information: Dr. McKay, an NTSB Chief Medical Officer, provided a statement on her findings in reference to the airplane accident in Orleans, IN, on July 1, 2019. She, in part, stated:

For this case, I reviewed the FAA medical case review, autopsy findings, toxicology results, personal medical files, your reports, and discussed the case with you.

According to the FAA medical case review this 42-year-old male sport pilot student had never had an aviation medical exam, nor was he required to.

According to the autopsy performed by the Lawrence County Forensic Services Center, the cause of death was head, chest, and abdominal injuries. No significant natural disease was identified.

Toxicology testing performed by the FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory identified sertraline and its metabolite desmethylsertraline in blood and urine. 7-amino-clonazepam was also identified in urine and blood.

According to medical records obtained from the pilot's family physician for the three years preceding the accident, the pilot had been treated with sertraline and clonazepam for an unspecified anxiety disorder for many years. He had no other significant medical conditions diagnosed.

Sertraline, often marketed as Zoloft, is an antidepressant used to treat depression and anxiety disorders. While any drug acting in the central nervous system can affect behavior, sertraline is not known to be directly impairing. (See: <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=f9641190-9151-4f7e-89ff-1e7a818c30ee> ) 7-amino-clonazepam is a metabolite of clonazepam, a sedating benzodiazepine commonly marketed with the name Klonopin. It is available by prescription as a Schedule IV controlled substance and carries this warning, "Since clonazepam produces central nervous system depression, patients receiving this drug should be cautioned against engaging in hazardous occupations requiring mental alertness, such as operating machinery or driving a motor vehicle." (See: <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=ebc11109-e7bf-452d-b675-4b3236d54164> )

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I can attest that the above summary is correct to the best of my knowledge:

**Edward F. Malinowski**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**  
**Air Safety Investigator**