NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Research and Engineering
Washington, DC

Medical Factual Report

January 5, 2022

Mary Pat McKay, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer

A. ACCIDENT: WPR21LA082; Warm Springs, OR

Date and time: January 9, 2021; 1336 local time
Injuries: 1 fatal

B. GROUP IDENTIFICATION

No group was formed for the medical evaluation in this accident.

C. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

1. Purpose

   This investigation was performed to evaluate the pilot for medical conditions, the use of medications/illicit drugs, and the presence of toxins.

2. Methods

   The FAA medical file, personal health records, and the investigator's reports were reviewed. No autopsy was performed and no toxicology testing performed dur to the extreme damage to the remains. Relevant regulation and medical literature were reviewed as appropriate.

   FAA Medical File

   According to the FAA medical file case review, the 72 year old male pilot had reported 12,350 total flight hours as of his last medical exam, dated 9/2/2020. At that time, he was 66 inches tall and weighed 155 pounds. He had reported having seasonal allergies to the FAA and the use of loratadine (Claritin) to treat them. This drug is not considered impairing. In addition, he had reported a previous orthopedic procedure and sun related skin damage. No significant abnormalities were identified, and he was issued a second class medical certificate limited by a requirement he wear corrective lenses.

Autopsy

According to the autopsy performed by the Wasco County Medical Examiner's Office, the cause of death was generalized blunt force trauma and the manner of death was accident. Due to the severity of injury, a limited external examination was performed; no heart, brain, or lung tissue was identified. No natural disease was identified in the limited exam.

Toxicology

Toxicology testing was not performed as no specimens were submitted by the Wasco County Medical Examiner's Office.

Personal Medical Records

Personal medical records for the 3 years preceding the accident were requested and obtained from the pilot's usual provider. These records demonstrated that the pilot had a number of longstanding diagnoses including anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, seasonal allergies, glaucoma, and high cholesterol.

His regular medications over the year preceding the accident included alprazolam and sertraline for his psychiatric disease, atorvastatin and fenofibrate for his high cholesterol, lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide for his blood pressure, and three different eye drops to treat his glaucoma. In March 2020, he reported using Zyrtec-D to treat his seasonal allergies.

Medication Descriptions

Alprazolam is a prescription benzodiazepine available as a Schedule IV controlled substance, generally used to treat anxiety. It carries with it a risk of addiction and abuse, and causes sedation. As a result, it carries multiple warnings including, "patients receiving alprazolam should be cautioned against engaging in hazardous occupations or activities requiring complete mental alertness such as operating machinery or driving a motor vehicle." [1]

Sertraline is an antidepressant often marketed as Zoloft. It is not generally considered impairing. [2]

[1] National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Alprazolam. https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=a23063c0-099a-4256-b95f-3a857bbf704b Accessed 1/5/2022.

[2] National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Sertraline. https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=8c8bcba9-eaeb-aa44-f9ea-b580de55a439 Accessed 1/5/2022.

Atorvastatin and fenofibrate are cholesterol lowering drugs. They are not generally considered impairing.[3, 4]

Lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide is a combination product used to treat high blood pressure. It is not generally considered impairing.[5]

Zyrtec-D, is a combination of cetirizine, a sedating antihistamine, and pseudoephedrine, a decongestant with sympathomimetic effects. It carries this warning, "Do not use more than directed; drowsiness may occur; avoid alcoholic drinks; alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness; be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery." [6]

D. SUMMARY OF MEDICAL FINDINGS

The 72 year old male pilot had reported having seasonal allergies to the FAA and the use of loratadine (Claritin) to treat them. This drug is not considered impairing. In addition, he had reported a previous orthopedic procedure and sun related skin damage.

According to the autopsy performed by the Wasco County Medical Examiner's Office, the cause of death was generalized blunt force trauma and the manner of death was accident. Due to the severity of injury, a limited external examination was performed; no heart, brain, or lung tissue was identified. No natural disease was identified in the limited exam.

Toxicology testing was not performed as no specimens were submitted by the Wasco County Medical Examiner's Office.

According to personal medical records, the pilot had a number of longstanding diagnoses including anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, seasonal allergies, glaucoma, and high cholesterol.

His regular medications over the year preceding the accident included alprazolam and sertraline for his psychiatric disease, atorvastatin and fenofibrate for his high cholesterol, lisinopril-hydrochlorothiazide for his blood pressure, and three different eye drops to treat his glaucoma. In March 2020, he reported using Zyrtec-D to treat his seasonal allergies.

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[3] National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Atorvastatin. https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=cda119f2-54c8-4a08-b266-a0dbd214d2ce Accessed 1/5/2022.

[4] National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Fenofibrate. https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=da2f0ba4-7c16-4fb0-bc1c-45540e8fefbf Accessed 1/5/2022.

[5] National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Lisinopril and Hydrochlorothiazide. https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=af0c5240-4a98-4b25-b805-d6d3889bdc62 Accessed 1/5/2022.

[6] National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Zyrtec-D. https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=1e8eb279-3522-40e4-8062-06b5354f0d29 Accessed 1/5/2022.