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# Update ME

A brief update from the  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Central Medical Unit

06 December 2007



Welcome to another issue of our *Update ME* newsletter.

## **Air New Zealand medical certification policy**

Air New Zealand has requested that all CAA MEs be advised concerning their policy for the medical certification of their over-60 international airline pilots. Air New Zealand has already asked their over-60, and likely to soon be over-60, international pilots to seek the issue of a 6-month duration medical certificate ... even when a 12-month duration certificate might otherwise be issued.

This policy has been established in the hope of avoiding the potential operational complications that result from New Zealand having a maximum certification duration, for over-60 class 1 applicants, of 12-months ... of a greater duration than the ICAO 6-months limit.

So, if you're dealing with an Air New Zealand international airline pilot who is over-60, or will become over-60 soon, then you should give thought to this policy and check what the pilot wants. If at all in doubt please contact the Air New Zealand medical department for further advice.

## **Reminder: Where are you?**

It is very helpful for MEs to advise CAA promptly when they shift office, and when they're taking time-off.

## **From the literature: SSRI treated depression**

The August 2007 issue of the "blue journal", *Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine* (Vol 78, No 8, August 2007, pp 749-755), contained the write-up of a review of the Australian policy of certifying some pilots being treated, with SSRIs, for depression. The article is titled "Antidepressant Use and Safety in Civil Aviation: A Case-Control Study of 10 Years of Australian Data".

This article can be downloaded from the AsMA / Ingenta website<sup>1</sup>, for free if you're a subscriber to

the journal. Otherwise, if you'd like to review the Australian findings, either email us and we can forward a copy of the paper or you can download a copy of the original report from the CASA website<sup>2</sup>.

## **It's that time of year again.**

As is the case each year the CAA Central Medical Unit has reduced staffing and availability over the Christmas period. This year the unit will be closing at 12:00 (noon) on Monday 24 December 2007 and will be closed through to 03 January 2008. For the week or two after 03 January 2008 we will have reduced staffing levels so may not be able to respond to requests as promptly as usual.

Thank you all for your efforts during the last year. It's been a relatively trouble free year for our medical certification system ... largely due to the great work of the MEs. Merry Christmas everyone ... from all of us here at the CAA medical unit. We hope you have a great Christmas break and look forward to working with you in the bright and sparkling New Year.

## **Update: Lubricants.**

Some of our advisers have been studying medical terminology and physiology. The matter of lubricants has just been brought to my attention ... and it's a matter well worth us all being aware of.

Cars and bicycles are lubricated by long-chain hydrocarbons, joints are lubricated by synovial fluid, lungs by surfactant, and advisers by chocolate. The obvious implied corollary was "give the advisers chocolate and things will run more smoothly".

We have all been told!

## **We are here to help!**

If you have any problems, questions, or queries, please contact our help-desk (details below).

<sup>1</sup> [www.ingentaconnect.com/content/asma/asma](http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/asma/asma)

<sup>2</sup> [www.casa.gov.au/avmed/download/antidepressant.pdf](http://www.casa.gov.au/avmed/download/antidepressant.pdf)

## **CAA Medical Help**

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