

National Transportation Safety Board

Office of Research and Engineering

Washington, DC 20594



Medical Factual Memorandum for Record

November 19, 2024

A. CASE

NTSB ID: CEN23FA187
Location: Chambers, Nebraska
Date: May 14, 2023

B. MEDICAL SPECIALIST

Specialist Turan Kayagil, MD, FACEP
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC

C. DETAILS

1.0 Description of Review

For purposes of evaluating the pilot for potentially impairing substances and potentially impairing medical conditions, the above Medical Specialist reviewed the following sources of medical information, along with selected relevant regulation, medical literature, and investigator reports.

- Final Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) medical case review
- Autopsy report (including Axis Forensic Toxicology report)
- FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory toxicology report

2.0 Summary of Medical Facts

The 69-year-old male pilot's last aviation medical examination was October 17, 2022. At that time, he reported no medication use and no active medical conditions. He was issued a second-class medical certificate limited by a requirement to wear corrective lenses.

Physicians Laboratory Services performed the pilot's autopsy, as authorized by the Holt County Attorney. According to the pilot's autopsy report, his cause of death was blunt force injury of the head, neck, and chest. Coronary artery disease was present, including 75-90% narrowing of the left anterior descending coronary artery by calcified plaque, 10-25% narrowing of the right coronary artery by plaque, and less than 10% narrowing of the left main and left circumflex coronary arteries by plaque. No coronary artery clot or heart muscle scarring was seen. The heart was described as enlarged, weighing 490 grams.¹ The autopsy did not identify other significant natural disease.

At the request of Physicians Laboratory Services, Axis Forensic Toxicology performed toxicological testing of postmortem heart blood and urine specimens from the pilot. Caffeine was presumptively detected in blood by screening, without a test to confirm.

The FAA Forensic Sciences Laboratory also performed toxicological testing of postmortem specimens from the pilot. Urine glucose was normal. No other tested-for substances were detected.

Caffeine is a central nervous system stimulant that is commonly ingested, including in coffee, tea, soft drinks, and chocolate; it is also an ingredient in certain anti-drowsiness medications and headache medications. Caffeine is not generally considered impairing.

Submitted by:

Turan Kayagil, MD, FACEP
Medical Officer

¹ The autopsy report noted that this heart weight was compared to an expected reference range of 233-463 grams based on body height. No significant atrial or ventricular dilatation was identified, and ventricular wall / interventricular septal thicknesses were normal.