



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Research and Engineering
Washington, DC

Medical Factual Report

July 5, 2022

Mary Pat McKay, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer

A. CRASH: ERA22FA189; Jacksonville, FL

Date and time: April 16, 2022

Injuries: 1 fatal

B. GROUP IDENTIFICATION

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

C. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION

1. Purpose

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

2. Methods

The FAA medical case review, autopsy report, toxicology findings, and the investigator's preliminary report were reviewed. Relevant regulation and medical literature were reviewed as appropriate.

FAA Medical Case Review

According to the FAA medical case review, the 66 year old male pilot had reported 406 total flight hours as of his last aviation medical examination dated 2/14/2019. At that time, he was 68 inches tall and weighed 206 pounds. He had reported having gastroesophageal reflux disease, hay fever, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and obstructive sleep apnea to the FAA as well as the use of pantoprazole, fexofenadine, losartan, chlorthalidone, amlodipine, aspirin, and atorvastatin to treat those conditions. These medications are not considered impairing. No significant abnormalities were identified, and he was initially issued a special issuance third class medical certificate limited by a requirement he

possess glasses for near/intermediate vision and marked “Not valid for any class after 2/28/202” but the certificate was withdrawn on 5/3/2019 when a medical report regarding his sleep apnea also identified his use of gabapentin, which he had not reported.

Autopsy

According to the autopsy report issued by the Office of the Medical Examiner, State of Florida, the cause of death was blunt impact trauma and the manner of death was accident. The heart demonstrated somewhat thickened walls: the left ventricle measured 1.4 cm, the septum measured 1.9 cm, and the right ventricular wall measured 0.5 cm. Averages for these numbers are 1.3, 1.3, and 0.3 cm respectively.¹ These types of changes are often associated with obesity and hypertension. No other significant natural disease was identified.

Toxicology

Toxicology testing performed by the FAA’s Forensic Sciences Laboratory identified cetirizine, trazodone, pantoprazole, carvedilol, amlodipine, tamsulosin, and losartan in cavity blood and urine.

Substance Descriptions

Cetirizine is a sedating antihistamine available over the counter, often with the name Zyrtec.² Trazodone is an antidepressant that is often used off-label as a treatment for insomnia. It carries this warning about performance, “Trazodone hydrochloride may cause somnolence or sedation and may impair the mental and/or physical ability required for the performance of potentially hazardous tasks. Patients should be cautioned about operating hazardous machinery, including automobiles, until they are reasonably certain that the drug treatment does not affect them adversely.”³

¹ Kitzman, DW; Scholz, DG; Hagen, PT; Ilstrup, DM; Edwards, WD. Age Related Changes in Normal Human Hearts During the First 10 decades of Life. Part II, Maturity: A Quantitative Study of 765 Specimens from 20 to 99 Years Old. Mayo Clin Proc. 1988; 63:137-146.

² National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Cetirizine. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=a5be7921-c1cb-4b9f-9f4a-1c4b68b2b8a3> Accessed 7/5/2022.

³ National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Trazodone. <https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=ed3039d8-3d27-4b71-a4b0-812943c9457f> Accessed 7/5/2022.

Pantoprazole is used to treat heartburn and is not considered impairing.⁴
Carvedilol, amlodipine, tamsulosin, and losartan are blood pressure medications that are not generally considered impairing.^{5,6,7,8}

D. SUMMARY OF MEDICAL FINDINGS

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⁴National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Pantoprazole.
<https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=7969d44b-7776-9a88-c544-eb51496b2b26>
Accessed 7/5/2022.

⁵ National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Carvedilol.
<https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=bcfe4b84-500e-4b93-ba20-aa7c4297b0ae>
Accessed 7/5/2022.

⁶ National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Amlodipine.
<https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=b52e2905-f906-4c46-bb24-2c7754c5d75b>
Accessed 7/5/2022.

⁷ National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Tamsulosin.
<https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=339c3b57-a339-4578-bfd7-46b25d911ff6>
Accessed 7/5/2022.

⁸ National Institutes of Health. US National Library of Medicine. DailyMed. Losartan.
<https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/drugInfo.cfm?setid=a8817f22-8478-49b9-8354-ab27ca222c6b>
Accessed 3/14/2022.