



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: WPR22FA098; Coalinga, CA

Date and time: February 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 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 53 year old male pilot had reported 32,800 total flight hours as of his last aviation medical exam, dated 10/22/2021. At that time, he was 70 inches tall and weighed 209 pounds. He had reported no chronic medical conditions and no use of medications to the FAA. He had previously been issued a SODA for defective 20/200 distant vision in the left eye correctable to 20/20. (1994). No significant abnormalities were identified and he was issued a second class medical certificate with the following limitation: "Must wear corrective lenses."

Autopsy

According to the autopsy report issued by the Sheriff-Coroner, County of Fresno, the cause of death was head injury due to blunt impact and the manner of death was blunt impact. No significant natural disease was identified. The pilot's post mortem Covid-19 PCR test was negative.

Toxicology

Toxicology testing performed by Central Valley Toxicology at the request of the Sheriff-Coroner identified acetaminophen in urine but no other tested-for drugs and no ethanol.

Toxicology testing performed by the FAA's Forensic Sciences Laboratory identified ethanol at 0.011 gm/dl in femoral blood but none in urine and found acetaminophen in both subclavian blood and urine.

Substance Descriptions

Ethanol is a social drug that acts as a central nervous system depressant. After ingestion, ethanol is quickly distributed throughout the body's tissues and fluids fairly uniformly. The distribution pattern parallels the water content and blood supply of each organ. Ethanol may also be produced in the body after death by microbial activity.¹ In this case, levels in various tissues may vary widely.

Acetaminophen is an over the counter analgesic and fever reducer commonly marketed with the name Tylenol. It is not generally considered impairing.

D. SUMMARY OF MEDICAL FINDINGS

The 53 year old male pilot had reported no chronic medical conditions and no use of medications to the FAA.

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¹ Federal Aviation Administration. Forensic Toxicology Drug Information. Ethanol. <http://jag.cami.jccbi.gov/toxicology/DrugDetail.asp?did=60> Accessed 03/02/2015.