



Medical Case Review

Assessment of Transient Hand Tremors and Fitness to Fly

(Based on clinical and operational observations)

Elaisa Haase MD
Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines
Date: June 2025



Case Scenario:

Airline captain grounded after observed hand tremors during ramp inspection on destination aerodrome

Case

- Class 1 Pilot (PIC) observed with hand tremors during ramp inspection on destination aerodrome.
- Pilot and company reported to the issuing state CAA regarding the incident.

Actions by the state CAA inspector

- video documentation showing pilot holding a water bottle showing no tremors
- Company subjected pilot to a medical evaluation to a nearby health facility
 - a medical certificate issued.

State CAA Inspector decision

- Concerns raised despite medical clearance
- Pilot temporarily grounded from flying duties
- Returned to home base as non-operational aircrew



Aeromedical Medical Evaluation and Recommendation by the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines

Case Profile

- 56 yo male
- Class 1 ATPL Captain
- Flight Hours:
 - Total: 12,823 hrs
 - Last 6 months: 117+39 hrs
- Aircraft Type: A320
- Case Report: Airline captain grounded after observed hand tremors during ramp inspection on destination aerodrome

Flight Schedule Summary (Feb 2024)

- Multiple long-haul flights with Layovers
- 3-4 Consecutive duty days
- Minimal rest at base



Past Medical History

- Hypertension
- Type II Diabetes Mellitus
- Hypercholesterolemia
- GERD
- Medications:
 - AM: Losartan and Vit B Complex
 - Lunch: Metformin
 - PM: Atenolol and Rosuvastatin
 - PRN: Esomeprazole

Social & Personal History

- Alcohol drinker
 - 2–4 beers occasionally
- Non-smoker

Physical Examination

- Vitals: Within normal limits
- Neurological exam: No significant deficits

Laboratory Findings

- CBC, lipid profile, hepatic and renal panels: Normal
- Blood glucose levels controlled
- CT Scan: normal

Neurology Referral

- Certified cleared and deemed fit to fly.

Approach in Assessing Hand Tremors:

Initial Screening (History/ Physical Examination)

Exclude Physiologic tremor (stress/ fatigue/sleep deprivation/
Caffeine/ salbutamol)

Identify red flags

YES, remove trigger, educate, and reassess

NO: proceed with diagnostics

Baseline diagnostics (CBC/ TSH, FT4,, FBS, Electrolytes, LFTs, renal panel, drug screening if indicated)

Neurological assessment (consider neurological referral MRI/EMG/tremor analysis)

Reach to an Aeromedical disposition:

- Fit to fly
 - transient and resolved
- Temporary Unfit to fly
 - under evaluation and treatment, tremor impacts operation
- Permanently unfit/ Refer to Authority
 - progressive neurological condition, medically unmanageable, associated with motor/cognitive dysfunction.

Clinical Impression

- Diabetes Mellitus, controlled
- Hypertension controlled
- No chronic neurological disorder
- Transient tremors due to: Cold, missed meals, anxiety, fatigue

Conclusion and Recommendations

- Patient is stable and conditions are well-managed
- Recommend take maintenance medication regularly
- Ensure lifestyle modification (diet, exercise, refrain alcohol intake)

Aeromedical Considerations:

Transient tremor can be disqualifying if a pilot is symptomatic or recurrent.

Return to flying duties:

- Symptom resolution

- Clearance by an AME or specialist

- Underlying cause and risk of recurrence

Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines Recommendation

1. Improve duty schedule to include period in his residence (home) and outlying stations conducive for rest and sleep to recover from cumulative fatigue due to lack of quality sleep.
2. Use of weather-appropriate clothing.
3. Regular and on-time meals and intake of maintenance medications
4. Operator is encouraged to establish occupational health programs on mental health and stress management.
5. Reminded of the provision of PCAR Part 2.10.1.6
-on *Decrease of Medical Fitness* that he shall not exercise the privileges of his license and related ratings or certificates at any time when he is aware of any decrease in his medical fitness that might render him unable to safely and properly exercise these privileges.



Thank You