

# The obstacles of air travel for passengers

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# VALK Foundation fear of flying treatment facility

**V** = *Vlieg* = flying

**A** = *Angst* = fear

**L** = Leiden University

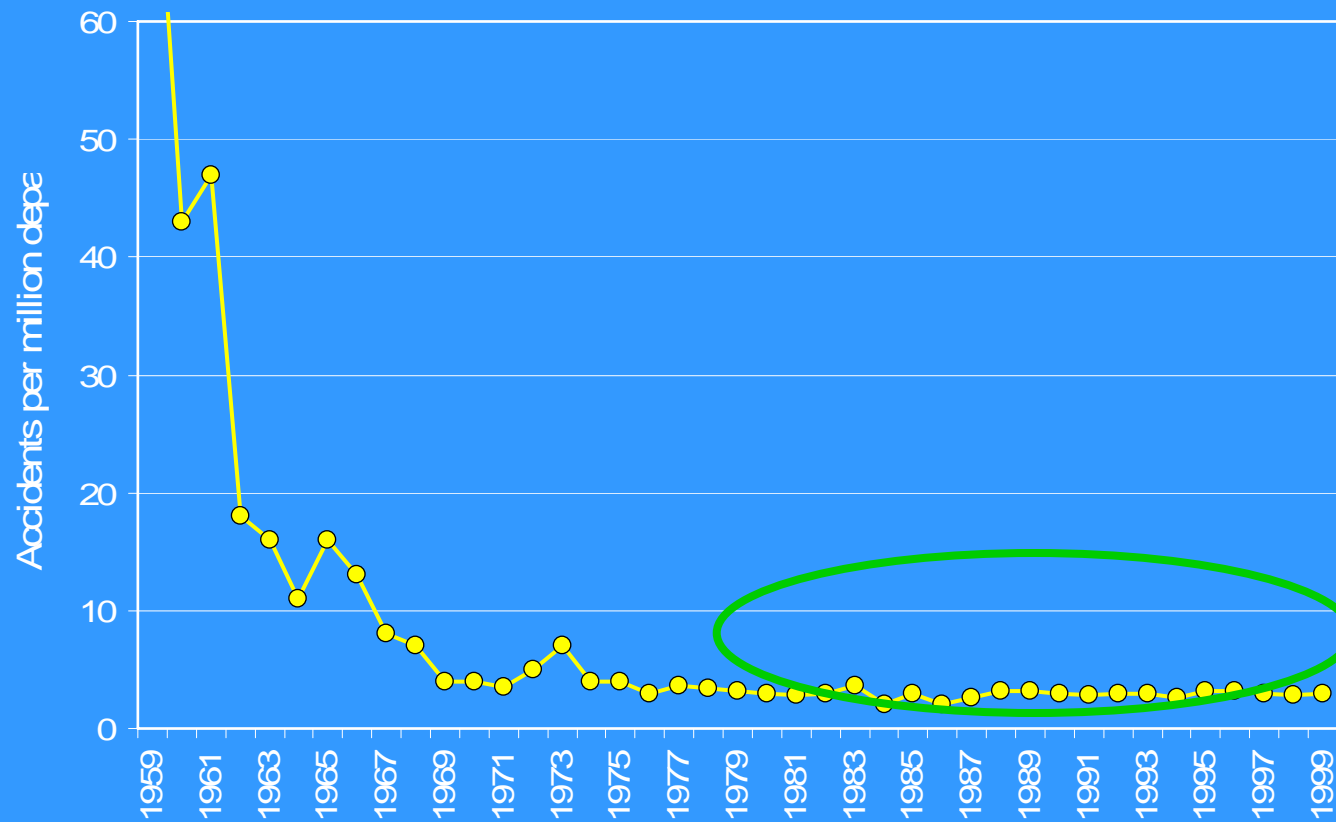
**K** = KLM, Royal Dutch Airlines





**VALK  
FOUNDATION  
LEIDEN**

# SAFETY HAS INCREASED



## ANXIETY HAS NOT DECREASED

Research has indicated that about one third of the population experience some level of anxiety regarding air travel

Our thoughts and interpretations  
determine our feelings

Not the actual situation or safety



Fear of flying is actually  
the result of  
one or more other fears

These fears are very common  
in all of us

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# CLAUSTRO PHOBIA





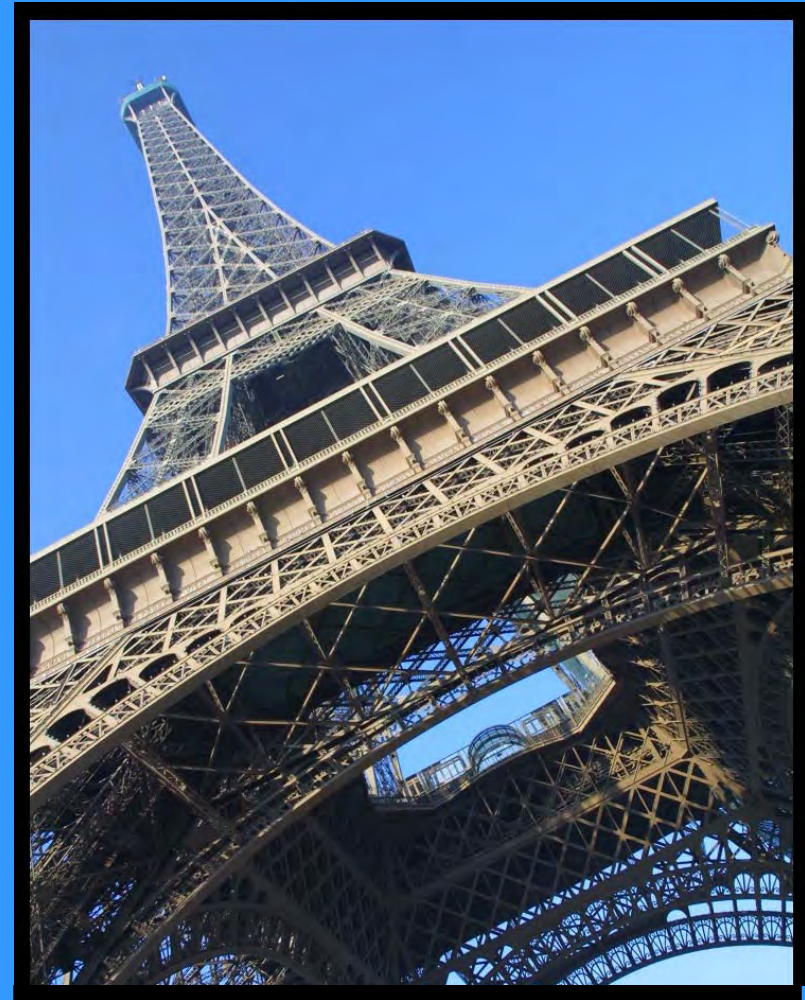
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# FEAR OF HEIGHTS



# LACK OF CONTROL



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# FEAR OF CROWDS



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## CONCLUDING:

Fear of flying has  
nothing to do with safety

but is very common

One third of the passengers on board have a certain level of fear of flying, especially during take-off and turbulence

Of those, **25%** are frequent flyers!



# How did we deal with fear in aviation?

ignorance  
avoidance  
denial





Denial

Rainman

What is the effect on  
the fearful passenger?

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Now, what  
is he  
thinking?

I did a great job!

I reassured her

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And what  
does *she*  
think?

I know, I'm crazy

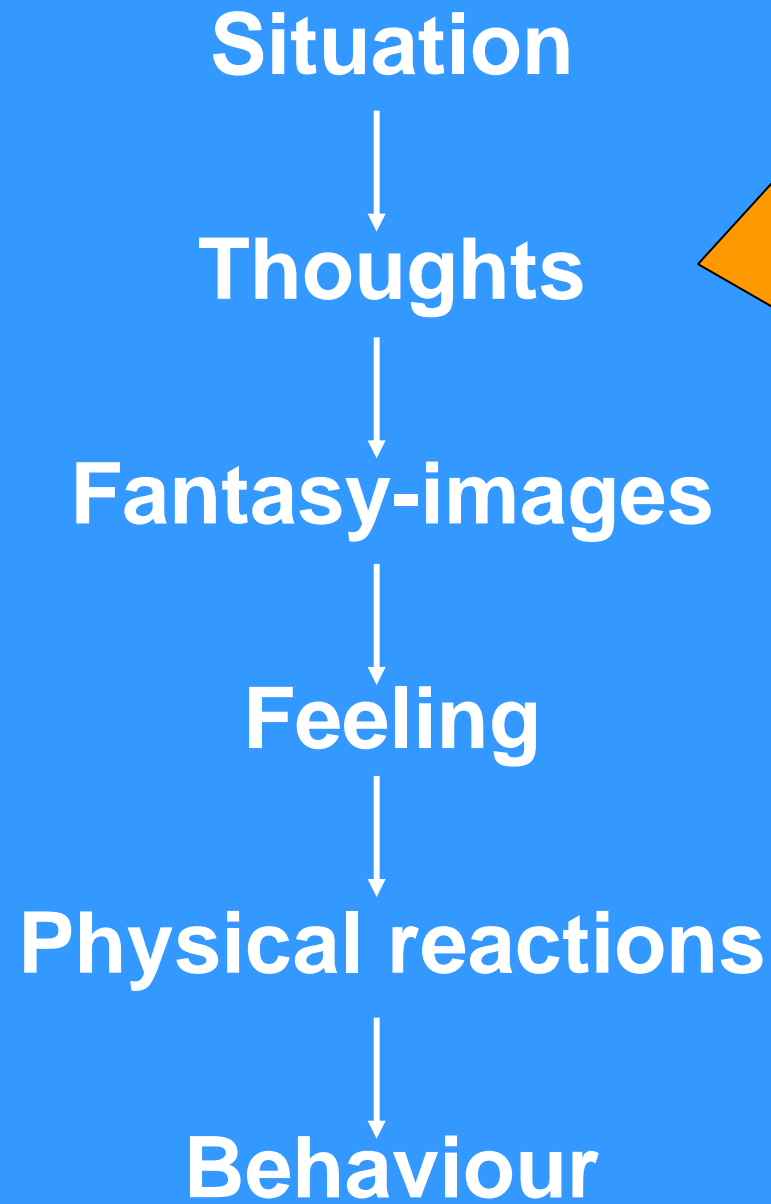
Leave me alone

What are  
her  
thoughts  
now?

He understands me

I am not crazy

My reaction is  
normal



Trying not to be afraid  
is a continuous,  
exhausting fight

THAT CAN'T BE WON

Ignorance and  
suppression of fear  
often leads to  
avoidance behavior, e.g.

Pills and alcohol



Disruptive passenger behaviour  
causes all sorts of problems  
on a daily basis

Not fear itself, but pills and  
alcohol is often the cause



This causes a lot of stress  
for ground staff,  
cabin and cockpit crew,  
and other passengers



- no show at the gate
- suitcase parade
- return to gate
- unscheduled landing

# Change in Attitude

- Awareness and acceptance of the fact that fear is a common emotion on board
- Attention and understanding for fear
- Fear doesn't disappear by denying it
- Fear is a normal, natural emotion

# Suggestions for improvement

- In-flight magazine:
  - Information about flying
  - Information about fear of flying
- Personal video system
  - Information about flying
  - Information about fear of flying
  - Relaxation and breathing exercises

# Suggestions for improvement

- Training for cabin crew
  - Information about fear of flying
  - Do's and don'ts
  - Basic therapeutical interventions
- Information for cockpit crew
  - Information about fear of flying
  - Do's and don'ts

Acknowledging fear  
is the first step  
to improve passengers well-being

Acceptance of fear  
as a normal, healthy emotion  
is the next