

Mental health Assessment of Class 1 pilots : the role of psychiatrist and clinical psychologist expert in France

5th European Congress of Aerospace Medicine
Oslo - september 15-18, 2016

Col Marie-Dominique Colas, MD, Prof.
Head of SMPCAA / AeMC Percy, Clamart, France



DISCLOSURE INFORMATION

Marie-Dominique Colas

5th European Congress of Aerospace Medicine

- I have no financial relationships to disclose.
- I will not discuss off-label use and/or investigational use in my presentation



2 DIFFERENT FRAMEWORKS



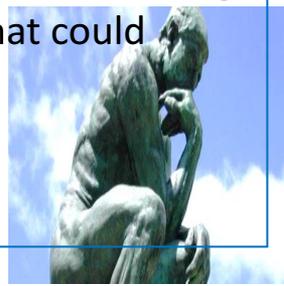
« Psycho-vocational » Selection

- **Human Resources field** : psychometric tests and interview conducted under the responsibility of the employer (airlines, French Armed Forces) ;
- Conducted by **occupational psychologist** ;
- **2 examples** : Air France and French Armed Forces ;
- **Process** : **testing abilities**, psychomotor and cognitive flight skills, adaptative capacities (multi-crew cooperation, capacity to be captain), motivation, personality, etc ;
- **Goal**: **selecting** the most suitable person to meet the air transport operational needs and the employer's expectations.

« Medico-psychological » Assessment

- **Aeromedical field**, complying with a regulatory framework (Part-MED to the Aircrew Regulation No 1178/2011) ;
- Conducted primarily by **Aeromedical Examiners** ;
- **2 examples** : Air France and French Armed Forces ;
- **Process** : **clinical evaluation** of compatibility of health with physiological and psychological aeronautical constraints, related to the licence privileges, and flight safety ;
- **Goal**: individual health preservation and screening medical and psychological disorders that could represent a threat for flight safety.

FLIGHT SAFETY



MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT : A Process Based on Clinical Practice



MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT BY THE AME: Detecting Warning Signs



- **Circumstances of the medical examination ?**
: after a serious incident or accident ? After an interruption of flight ?
- **Appearance? Attitude? Behavioural change?**
- **Medical history of psychiatric conditions?**
- **Application form** :suicide attempts or self-harm? Psychotropic drugs uses ?
- **Medical record?**
- **Desire to fly?**
- **Adjustment disorders? Stress and fatigue?**
- +Examination

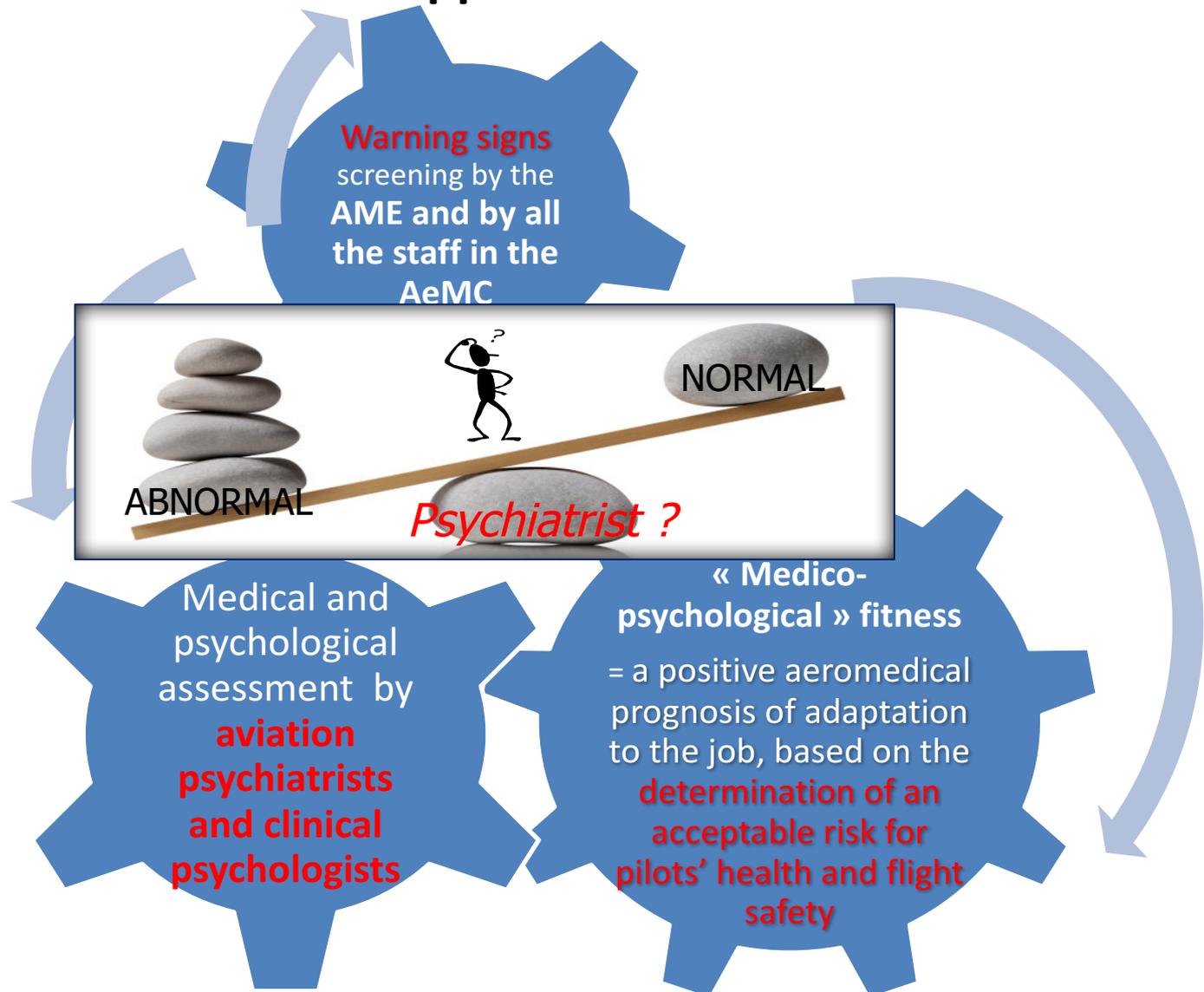
- **Risk factors ?** : for example, early age of contact with psychoactive substances (alcohol, cannabis, etc.)
- **Life stressors?** : divorce, difficulties with relatives, friends and work colleagues ?
- **Interpersonal and relationship issues ?**
- **Psychotropic drugs use ?**
Self-medication?
- **Psychotherapy?**
- **Repeated sick leaves? Hospitalization ?**
(hospitalization medical report analysis)

The pilot is referred to a psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist for review prior to her/his fit status being decided

MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT :

A Process Based on Clinical Practice and on a Comprehensive

Approach



AEROMEDICAL PROGNOSIS :

the determination of an acceptable risk for pilots' health and flight safety

- **Type of mental or behavioural disorder ?** Problematic use of psychoactive substances?
- **Severity of the mental or behavioural impairment?** In-flight incapacitation? Risk-taking behaviours?
- **Risk related to the psychotropic medication?**
- **Risk related to relapse of psychological deficiencies?**
- **Risk related to personality? Motivation?**
- **The risk of undetected conditions?**

- **Environmental constraints?**

- CRM?

- **Ensuring pilot medical, psychological and psychiatric aeromedical fitness** so that their medical condition is less likely to interfere with the safe exercise of the privileges of their licences
- **A medical staff analysis with psychiatrist and AME to propose acceptable measures:** fitness limitation case by case, enhanced the follow-up for flight crew with a history of psychiatric condition.



A NETWORK OF EXPERTS



- **A common training to aviation psychology and psychiatry for AME** by aviation psychiatrists experts (initial and refresher trainings organized by Paris 5 University and by a military aeromedical training centre located in AeMC Percy) ;
- **A proven experience based on 50 years of aeronautical clinical practice** and on the doctor-pilot relationship ;
- A special dedicated aviation psychological unit for all air crews ;
- **Sharing of professional experience and practices used in decision-making** (risk assessment related to incidence of mental disorders based on the continuous oversight and competency of AMEs),