

# **Psychological Selection versus Medical and Psychological Assessment of Class 1 pilots : the French Experience**

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





# 2 DIFFERENT FRAMEWORKS



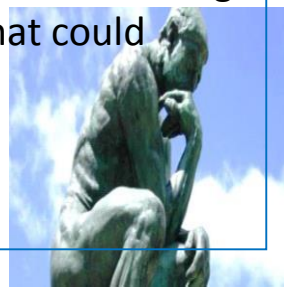
## « Psycho-vocational » Selection

- **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.

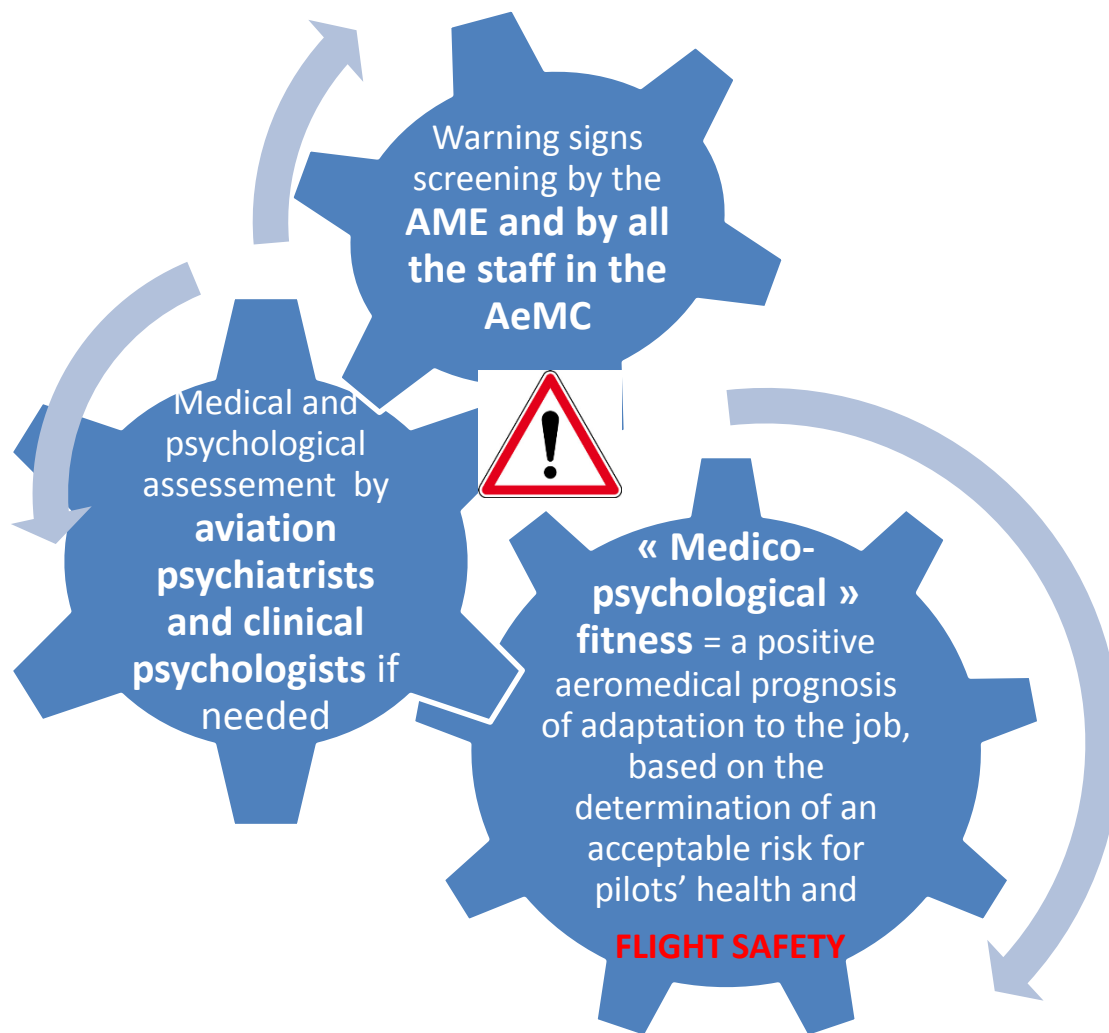
## « Medico-psychological » Assessment

- **Aeromedical field**, complying with a regulatory framework (Med-Aircrew) ;
- 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 ASSESSEMENT 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 ?**
- **Application form** :suicide attempts or self-harm? Psychotropic drugs uses ?
- **Medical record?**
- **Desire to fly?**
- **Adjustment disorders? Stress and fatigue?**

- **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)

# A NETWORK OF EXPERTS



- A common training to aviation psychology and psychiatry for AME by aviation psychiatric expert (training centre for aviation medicine located in AeMC Percy) ;
- A proven experience based on 50 years of aeronautical clinical practice and on the doctor-pilot relationship ;
- Sharing of professional experience and practices used in decision-making ;
- A special dedicated aviation psychological unit for all air crews ;
- Other « gatekeepers » could join the network.