

Mental Fitness Evaluation and Training of AME's EAAP Perspective

EASA Aircrew Medical Fitness Workshop

Drs Ir André Droog, president
European Association for Aviation Psychology (EAAP)

Cologne, 8 December 2015



European Association for Aviation Psychology (EAAP)

Founded 1956 as WEAAP by 9 European psychologists, renamed EAAP in 1996

EAAP promotes the study and the application of psychology in the field of aviation (civil and military)

470 members (50 countries, 85% European)

BIANNUAL CONFERENCES

- 32nd Conference - Sept 2016, Portugal

COURSES

- Selection of Aviation Personnel
- Human Factors in Flight Safety
- Intl Summer School on Aviation Psychology
- MSc Course HF in Aviation

ACCREDITATION

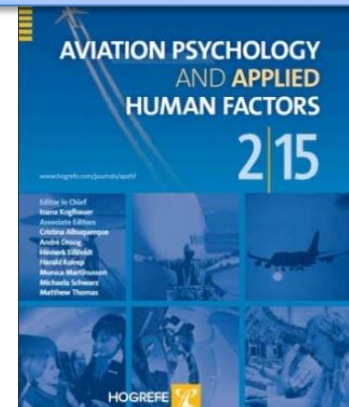
- Aviation Psychologist
- Human Factors Specialist in Aviation
- Junior Aviation Psychologist

JOURNAL

- Av. Psychology and Applied Human Factors

COLLABORATIONS

- Australian Av. Psychology Association (AAvPA)
- European Society of Aerospace Medicine (ESAM)
- European Cockpit Association (ECA)
- European Fed. of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA)
- Intl. Symposium on Av. Psychology, USA (ISAP)



Aviation Psychologists and Human Factors Experts

Work areas and settings

Areas

Selection (Pilots, ATCO's, Cabin crew)
Training (CRM, Flight Instructors, Examiners)
Clinical Psychology (mental health assessment/
treatment/ promotion;
Fear of flying treatment)
Design (flight deck)
Incident & Accident Investigation
Research
Teaching
Safety Management Development
.....

Settings

Selection institutes & consultants
Mental Health Institutions
Research institutions
Airlines, Air Forces, Other operators
Flight academies
Air Navigation Service Providers
Airports
Manufacturers
Incident & Accident Investigation organizations/boards
Universities & Higher Education Institutes
Regulators
.....



Psychological Evaluation before entering service

EASA Task Force Recommendation #2(a)

EAAP fully supports initial psychological evaluation of airline pilots before entering airline service and strongly recommends to assure the quality by referring to internationally agreed standards

Selecting those with the best potential for success in pilot training and the profession

Should be performed by qualified aviation psychologists



Mental Fitness Evaluation by AME

EASA Task Force Recommendation #2(b)

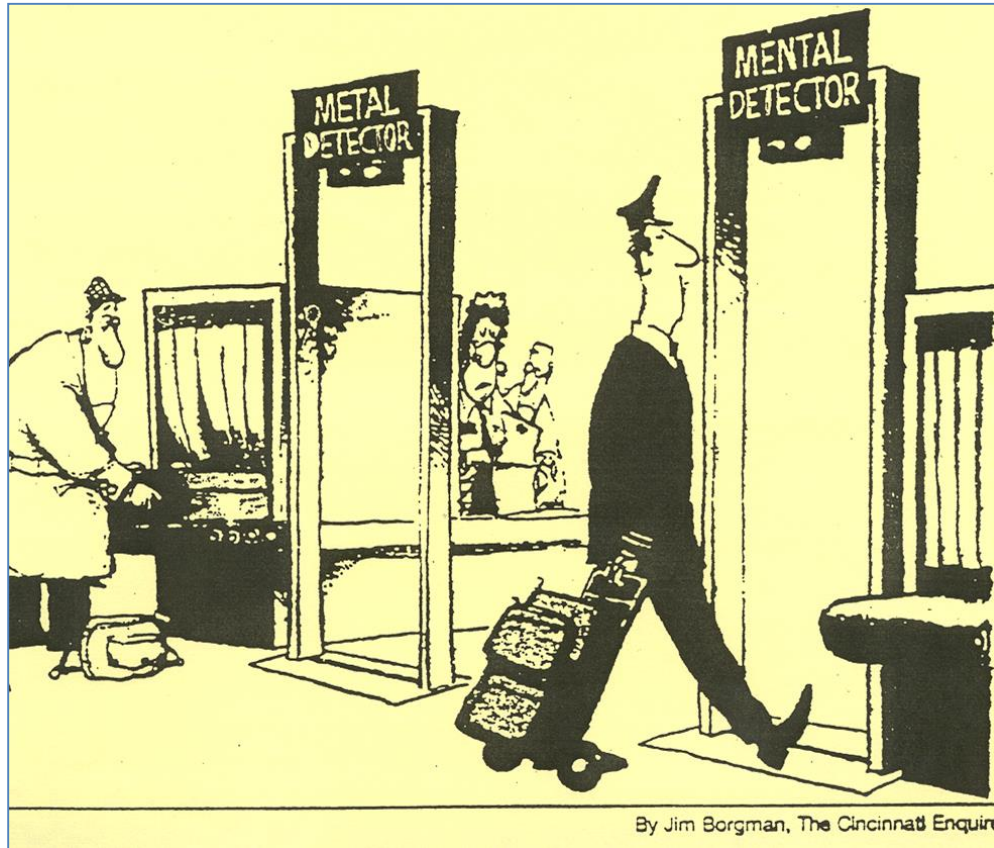
Strengthening the psychological part of the initial and recurrent aeromedical assessment and the related training

Challenges for the AME in detecting signs and signals of mental health issues

Nature of problem	certain disorders are difficult to detect early in their development
Competency	generally an AME is not a mental health practitioner like a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist; AME may not be sufficiently trained or experienced
Setup of situation	time for full aeromedical assessment including mental fitness and mental health evaluation is limited
Underreporting	pilots generally fear being grounded or losing their licence and job when being open about experienced health or mental problems; individual may not be open



Mental Health in Aviation



Mental Health in Aviation

Aviation mental health is concerned with

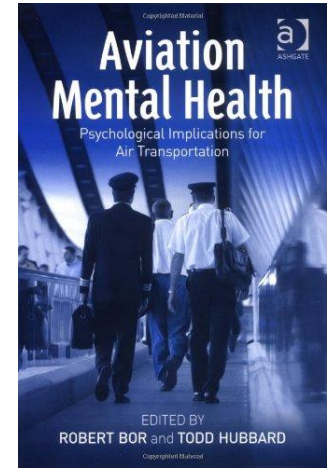
- **preventing mental health problems** through proactive health and fitness promotion
- **monitoring the psychological health** of those being trained or employed
- **assessing and treating** those who encounter psychological problems
- **determining** fitness to fly when psychological causes or symptoms are involved
- **identifying** those psychologically unfit to fly
- **providing support** to those found to be unfit to fly, whether temporarily or permanently
- **helping to regain fitness**

(after Robert Bor, 2015)

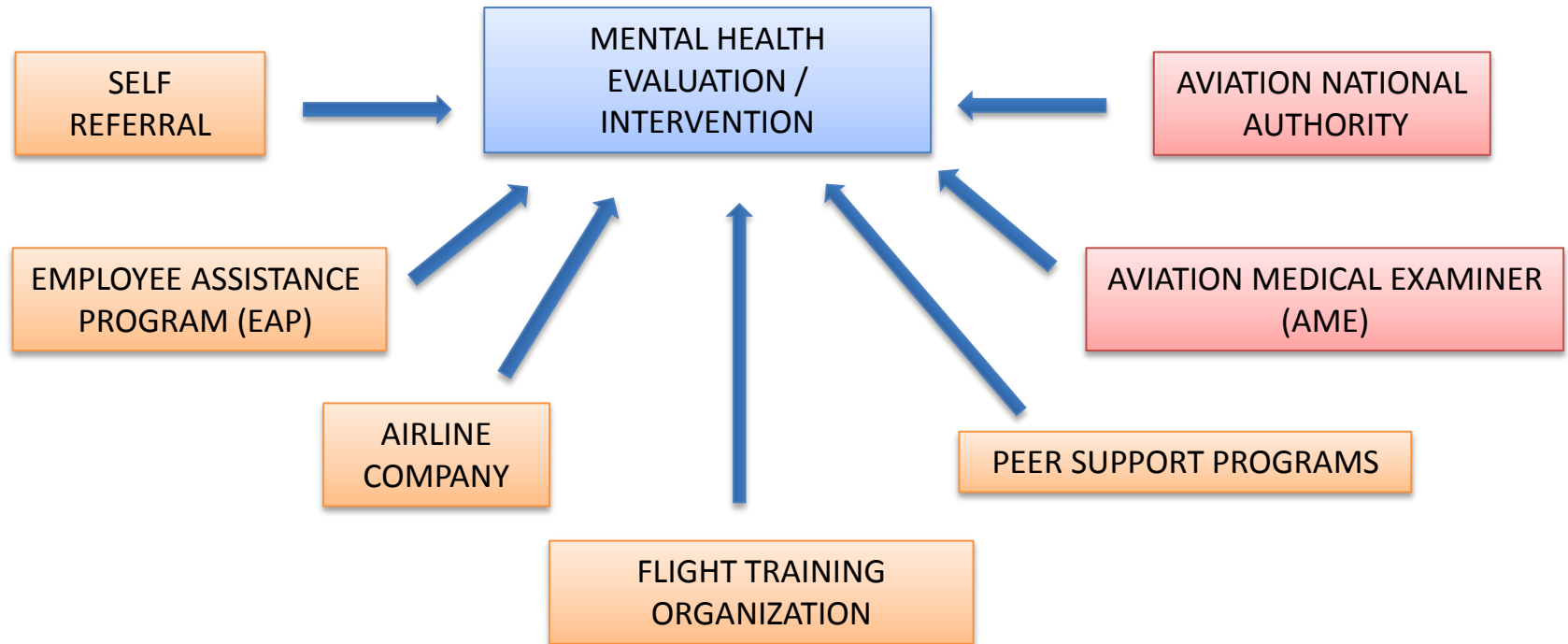
Involving the psychologist

Mental health of aircrew is a critical component within the flying environment. Therefore, assessment and monitoring of the mental health of pilots is deemed critical because of safety-related concerns.

Aviation mental health practitioners (clinical aviation psychologists and psychiatrists) are in a unique position in that their training and background affords them the ability to assess fitness to fly from a mental health perspective within the commercial and general aviation environment.



REFERRAL FOR MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION/INTERVENTION (CLINICAL AVIATION PSYCHOLOGIST AND/OR PSYCHIATRIST)



Strengthening strategy

Develop and promote positive attitudes to mental health

- we must not drive concerns underground
- avoid any stigmatization
- educate pilots from the beginning of training (HPL+)
- offer pilots coaching and psychological support

Work on climate of mutual trust

- educate the aviation community – just culture
- change perceptions (Pilot/AME - Pilot/Psychologist)

Work together:

- AME networks
- teams of AME's and Clinical Psychologists/Psychiatrists (consultation/referral)

Improve training of AME's

- aviation clinical psychologists and psychiatrists should be involved in training and regular refreshments of the AME's
- strengthen advisory role of AME



Training the Aeromedical Examiner (or Advisor?)

Competency based (ICAO)

Focused on

Knowledge and the practical application of that knowledge

- sources for mental health-related problems
- psychosocial stressors
- mental health warning signs to be alert for
- reasons for referral

How to conduct the Aeromedical Interview

- Pilot-AME relationship
- interviewing

Referral decisions

AME teamwork

Advisory role

Standards for level of competency should be set

Precondition: motivation of the AME

to understand the pilot and his psychosocial and work circumstances, as expressed by EAAP, ESAM and ECA in the commonly agreed 'The Pilot-AME Relationship' leaflet



Summary

Psychological evaluation by qualified aviation psychologists

**Stronger involvement of Aviation Mental Health Practitioners
(clinical psychologists/ psychiatrists) in assessment process and
training of AME's**

EAAP will be happy to support EASA with expertise any time



