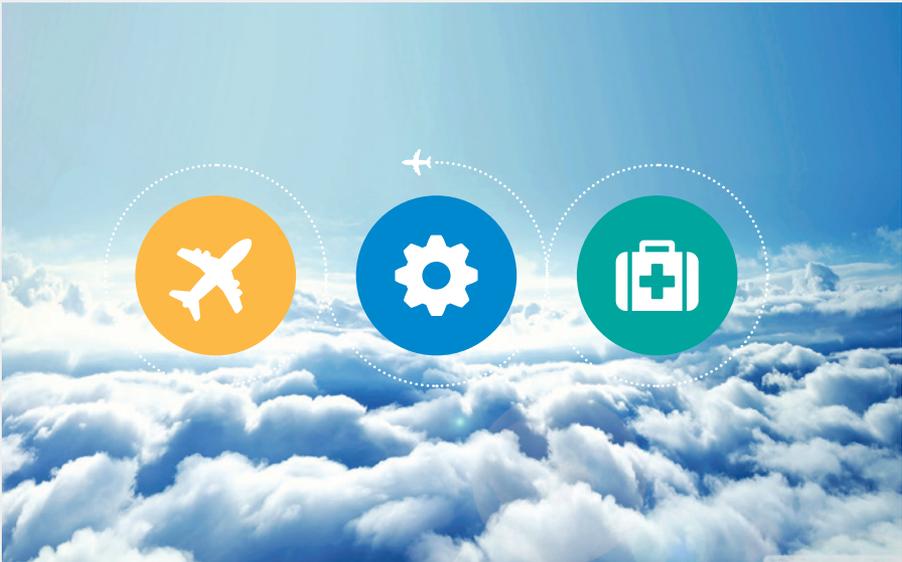




USE OF MEDICATION IN THE AVIATION ENVIRONMENT



INTRODUCTION

- ➔ **Guidance material for:**
General Medical Practitioners, consultants, specialists and Aeromedical Examiners (AMEs)
- ➔ **Connecting the choice of medication to working conditions:**
Mitigate risk factors through the right decisions and treatment
- ➔ **Use of medication:**
Familiarization with drugs and their side effects
- ➔ Developing **Trust** and **Confidence** between pilot/air traffic controller (ATCO) and his/her AME
- ➔ **Educate** pilots/ATCOs on the potential risks of medication including self-medication and the need to **seek help**



Main principles of medication use in aviation

Medication is used to treat a variety of medical conditions or to relieve symptoms. Many drugs are also available from pharmacists, supermarkets or on-line for self-medication.

- Evidence-based prescription: AMEs should evaluate that the correct medication is prescribed to the right patient.
- Collaboration with patient.
- Use of medication: Take into consideration the side effects and the importance of them in the aviation domain.
- Balance benefit and risk ratio: AMEs should assess the illness itself, the impact of the medication and the risk and benefits for the patient in his/her working environment.
- Sources: Use official sources for information on medication.

MEDICATION SIDE EFFECTS





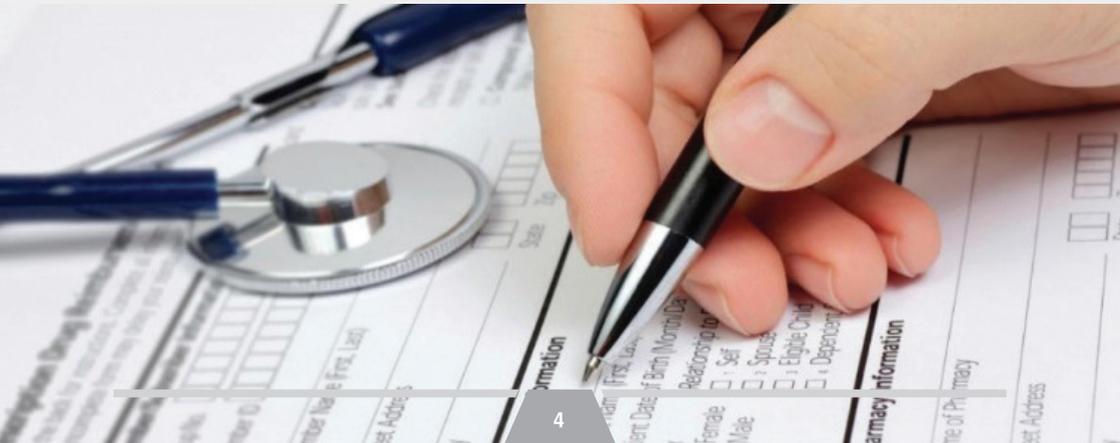
General prescribing guidance

Key points:

- Identify the kind and severity of the disease.
- Assess the risk of the disease itself to the working environment.
- Consider the working conditions (such as altitude, cabin pressure, stress...) in relation with the disease and treatment.
- Examine the side effects of drugs.
- Decide on a period of grounding if needed depending on the type of disease, the kind of drug and the familiarisation with any possible side effects.
- Helpful questions to ask yourself:
 - Does the medical condition itself preclude the safe operation of the flying activity?
 - Which is the right medication for this disease?
 - Are the potential side effects more of a risk than the medical condition?
 - Efficacy of the medication? Individual sensitivity?



Scan the QR code to download the guidance material regarding medication





ASSESSMENT OF FITNESS

➔ A pilot/ATCO should not fly or operate if

- The condition itself makes the pilot/ATCO unfit.
- The medication could have side effects that could affect the performance or increase the risk of incapacitation.

In case of common diseases:

If there is no evidence for adverse effects and the medication is efficacious, the pilot might fly while being under treatment.

In case of more severe diseases:

Determine the risk/benefit ratio and release pilot/ATCO from duty if necessary. For illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, psychiatric, gastro-intestinal and urological conditions the pilot/ATCO will be assessed as unfit until the stabilization or improvement of the disease. Then, supervise and re-assess patient.

Long-term treatments:

For treatments of medical conditions such as diabetes or hypertension decide on a grounding period when starting a new medication until assessing the impact of it and the performance of the patient. If medication proved efficacious without adverse effects, allow the pilot/ATCO to return to work.

Regular supervision of patients who are under long term treatment by the same treating physician.



Relations between pilots/ATCOs and treating physicians/AMEs

- Development of **Confidence** and **Trust**
- Win-win relation: Listen to the patient and try to find the best solution for his/her health and needs
- **Education** of pilots/ATCOs on the importance to seek for help
- **Safe** and **honest dialogue**
- **Knowledge** of medical requirements in aviation





Guidelines for treating physicians and AMEs

- ➔ Accept that all medication can have potential side effects.
- ➔ Educate pilots/ATCOs about the potential risks of self-medication.
- ➔ Consider the impact of side effects in the aviation related working environment.
- ➔ Do not deny aircrews justified treatment but inform them about the potential advantages and disadvantages of medication.
- ➔ Always consider a period of grounding when beginning new treatment.
- ➔ For treating physicians: If in doubt about the effects of illness and/or medication consult your patient's AME.
- ➔ For AMEs: Understand the regulatory principles, guidelines and regulations.

Guidelines for pilots/ATCOs

- ➔ Do not operate if there is a need to take medication.
- ➔ Be aware that medications can have side effects which could affect flight safety and work performance.
- ➔ For pilots engaged in flying competitions: be aware of the doping rules.
- ➔ Seek advice from a medical practitioner or pharmacist before taking medication and inform them of your occupation.
- ➔ Inform the AME when taking medication.
- ➔ Be prepared to be grounded or prevented from working when taking medication for the first time.



European Aviation Safety Agency
P.O. Box 10 12 53
D-50452 Cologne, Germany
<http://www.easa.europa.eu>

An Agency of the
European Union



European Society of Aerospace
Medicine
<http://www.esam.aero>
secretary@esam.aero