LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editorial board continues its effort to improve the quality of the journal. In pursuance of this aim a panel of referees has already been set up for reviewing the articles. We also invite our readers to send us letters voicing their opinions, criticism, suggestions i.e., on the quality and content of the articles, published as well as issues which need to be addressed or deliberated upon. Effort will be made to incorporate the replies, if received, from the respective authors.

- Editor -

Spatial Disorientation and Fear of Flying.

Dear Editor,

Reference is made to the case report “Spatial Disorientation and Fear of Flying” published in Winter 2002 edition of IJASM.

The report concluded a correlation between SD and Fear of Flying; The following are some observations that need clarification when such a correlation is made.

(a) The concerned pilot with 463 hrs of flying experience developed a phobic anxiety response to a couple of SD episodes. With the kind of experience in flying he possessed, how many times has he penetrated clouds and what were his responses then?

(b) The narrative does not give a lucid description of the symptomatology that led to this fear complex. Were other correlative factors like motivation in flying and passive airsickness considered, thus manifesting an exaggerated response to Spatial Disorientation? Also, was any psychotherapeutic trial carried out? If yes, what was the outcome? If not, why?

(c) Without a psychiatric evaluation and psychotherapeutic trial, the disposal recommended may not have been in order. Administrative disposal is generally recommended to pilots manifesting conscious fear of flying (manifestation of apprehension) without any mental illness but still unwilling to fly.

- Wg Cdr Atul Gupta, Flying Instructor School, AF Station, Tambaram

Reply from the Author:

As regards the observations made in Para 2 (a) of the above letter, it is important to note that the first episode that the flyer experienced of Fear of Flying was on 29 Jul 2001. Prior to this, no record of either his complaints or the number of times he flew in cloudy weather is available. It is also important to note that before this sortie the officer never complained of any problems, but after this episode, all the subsequent solo sorties in cloudy weather, resulted in a similar response from him. So, to what extent the previous record of flying in cloudy weather would contribute to the outcome is debatable.

Para 2 (b) and (c) of the letter have spoken about the lack of psychological and psychiatric evaluation. The pilot had undergone psychological evaluation, which revealed need affiliation, emotional over reactivity and situation anxiety. This has been brought out in the article. But Psychiatric evaluation was not done which was the basic aim why this article was presented, i.e to bring out the importance of psychiatric evaluation in such cases. This again has been brought out in the discussion of the article.
Dear Editor,

Received your latest issue of our Journal of Aerospace Medicine. I am very happy and must congratulate you on the changes brought about. The lay out is excellent and can compare with any International Journal of repute. I wish you all success and further laurels.

Air Mshl (Retd) PM Sundaram PVSM AVSM,
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The editorial board thanks the former Director General Medical Services, Air Mshl PM Sundaram for the compliments and encouragement.

Dear Editor,

It was a treat go through the Summer 2002 edition of IJASM. It was heartening to note that some of the features have become regular fixtures like the ‘Aviation Medicine Quiz’, ‘Journal Scan’, “Internet for the Internaut”, ‘Events Calendar’ & ‘Society News’. The efforts of the Society to publish the list of members are also praiseworthy. I complement you and your team for the effort.

A small observation. Two of the articles have not reference at all. This does not speak well of a journal of IJASM standards. If the authors were difficult to correspond with, some references could have been added at the ‘Editors discretion’ with intimation to the authors.

I would like to make a suggestion, which you may consider for the benefit of Advance course trainees and the IJASM. That writing is an art and a science needs no reiteration. To develop this optimally and overcome the initial hesitation in writing for a journal, an assignment may be given to a team of two trainees each. They may be tasked to write an article of 2000 words replete with diagrams, tables and references in double spacing and conforming to all the specifications of journal writing. The other groups could “peer review” it as per “guidelines of authors”, under the guidance of the Editor, IJASM. In the bargain, you may get a few well researched articles/monographs. The ideal time for the assignment would be towards the end of 1st year. If the exercise generates one prolific writer per batch, you may have to publish the journal quarterly soon and may feel proud of your initiative when you look back upon it as President, ISAM.

Sqn Ldr Vipin Sharma
SMC, 10 Wing AF, C/O 99 APO

Dear Editor,

This is in reference to the article titled “Problem of non-specific ECG abnormalities in aircrew” by Wg Cdr PS Singh and Wg Cdr P Kharbanda in the IJASM 2001:45(2) issue of your journal.

On the same subject and in the same journal in 1985 an article was published. It is surprising to note that this has not been referred to in this article. It is will be better due credit is given to previous works. The authors may be advised accordingly.


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Reply from Authors:

We thank Brig Kasthuri for drawing our attention to the article published in 1985. The omission was unintentional and is regretted.