



Update ME

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A brief update from the
Civil Aviation Authority
Central Medical Unit

15 June 2007

The solstice rapidly approaches and another year is almost half over. Welcome to another issue of our *Update ME* newsletter.

Reminder: Longer term risk after a TIA

In the February and July 2005 issues of this newsletter we mentioned the long-term risk of a potentially incapacitating event after a TIA. A recent case, involving a long-term survivor from a *minor* CVA, has redirected our attention to this issue.

The short term risk of a potentially incapacitating event, after a TIA, is widely appreciated and well reported as being high¹. What has not been well reported, until recently, are the medium – long term risks.

A number of papers, published over recent years, have indicated a longer term elevation in incapacitation risk after a TIA / minor CVA than had been previously appreciated. Two important papers, in this respect, are Clark et al (2003)² and van Wijk et al (2005)³.

“The overall risk of major vascular events remains high for 10 to 15 years after a TIA”²

These two articles, and others on the topic, are available from the CMU, as PDF files, upon request.

¹ Johnston S C et al. Short-term prognosis after emergency department diagnosis of TIA. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2000, 284(22):2901-2906.

Panagos P D et al. Short-term Prognosis after Emergency Department Diagnosis and Evaluation of Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA). *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 2003, 10(5):432.

² Long term risks of stroke, myocardial infarction, and vascular death in ‘low risk’ patients with a non-recent transient ischaemic attack. T G Clark, Murphy M F G, & Rothwell P M. *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry*, 2003, 75(5): 577-580.

³ Long-term survival and vascular event risk after transient ischaemic attack or minor ischaemic stroke: a cohort study. I van Wijk, L J Kappelle, J van Gijn, P J Koudstaal, C L Franke, M Vermeulen, J W Gorter, & A Algra. *Lancet*, 2005; 365: 2098-2104.

If you’re dealing with an applicant who has suffered a TIA or CVA during the last couple of decades then you may wish to review the incapacitation risk in light of the recently published medical evidence.

Removal of Medical Certificate Conditions

Very occasionally an ME will attempt to remove endorsements (especially surveillance requirements), during the life of a medical certificate, through *issuing* a new medical certificate.

If you wish to indicate that a condition, endorsed on a medical certificate, has been complied with then it is better to write a letter confirming this fact and not attempt to remove the condition from the medical certificate.

Endorsements are also sometimes removed when a new medical certificate is issued. Usually this decision is well documented and justified by the ME but occasionally there is no indication of the basis of the decision.

If you wish to issue a medical certificate carrying different endorsements to the previous certificate then please clearly document the basis of your decision.

We are here to help!

If you should have problems, questions or queries, please call us on 04 560 9466 or email med@caa.govt.nz.

Chances are that your enquiry will be first received by one of our two in-house living-legends, Julie and Deidre, who will either assist you themselves or redirect your enquiry to someone else.

CAA Medical Help

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