



Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Mr John Hoyte
Chairman
Aerotoxic Association Ltd
41 Bracondale
Norwich NR1 2AT

Wellington House
133 – 155 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UG
Tel: 020 7654 8090
www.gov.uk/phe

Sent by email: john.hoyte@aerotoxic.org

24 July 2020

Dear Mr Hoyte

Aerotoxic Syndrome

Thank you for your letter of 25 June, concerning Aerotoxic Syndrome.

While PHE supports and delivers evidence-based public health communications and guidance and provides expert advice to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), other Government departments and scientific advisory groups, the specific concerns you have raised in your letter are not within PHE's remit but rather sit with the Department for Transport (DfT).

In response to a request from the DfT, the UK Expert Advisory Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) conducted a review on the potential adverse health effects of the cabin air in 2007.

In light of recommendations made by the COT, further research projects were commissioned, which included four reports (e.g. Cranfield University 2009 and 2009; Institute of Environment and Health 2011 a/b; and Institute of Occupational Medicine 2012).

In 2013, COT considered this further research commissioned by the DfT and additional published peer reviewed literature. A key COT conclusion was that a toxic mechanism for the illness that has been reported in temporal relation to fume incidents was unlikely.

Also, many different chemicals had been identified in the bleed air from aircraft engines, but to cause serious acute toxicity, they would have to occur at very much higher concentrations than had been found (although lower concentrations of some might cause an odour or minor irritation of the eyes or airways).

Additionally, the symptoms that had been reported following fume incidents were wide-ranging (including headache, hot flushes, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, respiratory problems, dizziness and light-headedness), whereas toxic effects of chemicals tend to be more specific. However, uncertainties remained, and a toxic mechanism for symptoms could not confidently be ruled out.

The COT also advised that decisions to undertake further work would need to balance the likelihood that it would usefully inform further management of the problem against the costs of undertaking the work.

More detail can be found in the COT 2013 statement
<https://cot.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cot/cotpospapcabin.pdf>

I hope this information is helpful and provides some reassurance.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Duncan Selbie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive