

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

---

In the Matter of ALFREDIA J. DAVIS and U.S. POSTAL SERVICE,  
POST OFFICE, Jacksonville, FL

*Docket No. 02-2175; Submitted on the Record;  
Issued February 20, 2003*

---

DECISION and ORDER

Before ALEC J. KOROMILAS, COLLEEN DUFFY KIKO,  
DAVID S. GERSON

The issue is whether appellant's back, hip and vaginal conditions are causally related to factors of her federal employment.

On May 12, 2000 appellant, then a 51-year-old casual distribution clerk, filed a traumatic injury claim alleging that on April 24, 2000 she injured her head and her left hip when she lost her balance after loading a ledger machine and hit her head hard on a fiberglass buggy and fell on concrete on her left hip. She did not miss time from work.

A duty status report dated May 15, 2000 stated that appellant should not lift more than 10 pounds overhead. A medical note dated May 15, 2000 from the Tallahassee Community Hospital stated that appellant had a left hip strain. On June 1, 2000 a duty status report stated that she could return to work with a lifting restriction of less than 10 pounds. On June 15, 2000 a duty status report stated that appellant still required a 10-pound lifting restriction.

By letter dated June 6, 2000, the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs requested that appellant submit a medical report from her physician explaining how her employment caused or affected her condition.

Appellant submitted an x-ray of the spine dated June 1, 2000, which was normal. She also submitted progress reports dated June 1 and June 15, 2000 from Dr. Babette M. Mitchell, a Board-certified family practitioner, who noted that appellant experienced ongoing pain in her hip even when lifting 5- to 10-pound weights overhead. She diagnosed lumbar strain, prescribed medicine, physical therapy and a lumbar x-ray. Appellant submitted progress notes dated from July 12 through July 25, 2000 documenting her ongoing hip pain and treatment and an undated progress note indicating she was having a problem with vaginal discharge.

By letter dated May 14, 2002, the Office informed appellant that it had received information that she sustained a recurrence of disability and required that she complete a CA-2a form and submit the appropriate narrative report from her physician.

On May 29, 2002 appellant filed a recurrence of disability alleging that her recurrence occurred in August 2000 and that her symptoms of left hip pain and vaginal discharge continued. She stated that she stopped working in August 2000 and was unemployed. A progress note dated June 6, 2000 from Neighborhood Health Services indicated that appellant had vaginal discharge and back and head problems from her fall six weeks earlier. A health form dated April 23, 2002 informed appellant that her urinalysis showed a low-grade infection for which taking an antibiotic for one day was recommended. Progress notes dated June 6 and June 20, 2000 showed that appellant continued to have a problem with vaginal discharge.

By decision dated July 11, 2002, the Office denied the May 12, 2000 claim, stating that appellant did not show that the injury resulted in disability for work after June 1, 2000.

The Board finds that appellant did not establish that her back, hip and vaginal conditions are causally related to factors of her federal employment.

An employee seeking benefits under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act has the burden of establishing the essential elements of his or her claim including the fact that the individual is an "employee of the United States" within the meaning of the Act, that the claim was filed within the applicable time limitation of the Act, that an injury was sustained in the performance of duty as alleged and that any disability and/or specific condition for which compensation is claimed are causally related to the employment injury.<sup>1</sup> These are the essential elements of each and every compensation claim regardless of whether the claim is predicated upon a traumatic injury or occupational disease.<sup>2</sup>

The medical evidence required to establish a causal relationship, generally, is rationalized medical evidence. Rationalized medical evidence is medical evidence which includes a physician's rationalized medical opinion on the issue of whether there is a causal relationship between the claimant's diagnosed condition and the implicated employment factors. The opinion of the physician must be based on a complete factual and medical background of the claimant, must be one of reasonable medical certainty and must be supported by medical rationale explaining the nature of the relationship between the diagnosed condition and the specific employment factors identified by the claimant.<sup>3</sup>

Although appellant submitted a claim for a recurrence of disability, there is no evidence in the record that the Office ever accepted appellant's claim for a traumatic injury, which she filed on May 12, 2000. The evidence of record does not establish that she suffered a work-related injury. Some of the medical evidence shows that appellant had a diagnosis of hip strain and lumbar strain, that she suffered from ongoing back and hip pain and that she had a problem with vaginal discharge but none of the medical evidence contains any medical rationale explaining how her hip strain or other conditions arose from her employment. The Board has held that medical evidence that does not offer any opinion regarding the cause of an employee's

---

<sup>1</sup> *Elaine Pendleton*, 40 ECAB 1143, 1145 (1989).

<sup>2</sup> *Daniel J. Overfield*, 42 ECAB 718, 721 (1991).

<sup>3</sup> *Gary L. Fowler*, 45 ECAB 365, 371; *Ern Reynolds*, 45 ECAB 690, 695 (1994).

condition is of diminished probative value on the issue of causal relationship.<sup>4</sup> Despite the Office's repeated requests for appellant to submit the appropriate medical reports from her physician addressing how her conditions were caused or affected by her employment, appellant did not comply. She has, therefore, failed to establish her claim.

The July 11, 2002 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is hereby affirmed.

Dated, Washington, DC  
February 20, 2003

Alec J. Koromilas  
Chairman

Colleen Duffy Kiko  
Member

David S. Gerson  
Alternate Member

---

<sup>4</sup> *Linda I. Sprague*, 48 ECAB 386, 390 (1997).