

September 13, 2001.¹ Appellant claimed that she was being worked outside of her physical restrictions, which resulted in her inability to meet her performance standards. In a December 4, 2003 decision, the Board set aside Office decisions dated May 7, 2003 and December 9, 2002 and remanded the case for further development of the medical evidence.² The Board found that appellant had established a compensable work factor, *i.e.*, her attempt to meet work deadlines and keep up with her workload.

On remand, the Office referred appellant to Dr. Tarakumar Reddy, a Board-certified psychiatrist and neurologist, for a second opinion evaluation. In a March 2, 2004 report, Dr. Reddy noted appellant's chief complaint as depression. He stated: "[D]iagnoses given included Major Depression Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Multiple Phobias." Under the diagnosis section of the report, Dr. Reddy noted Axis I -- moderate major depression and dysthymic disorder, Axis 2 -- deferred, Axis 3 as in medical history, Axis 4 -- psychosocial problems and Axis 5 -- current GAF was around 60 to 65 and her prior GAF was around 70 to 72. He noted appellant was minimizing the magnitude of her emotional distress and was focusing on her physical symptoms. With respect to the causal relationship of appellant's emotional condition to the accepted factor of employment, Dr. Reddy stated that "it is within reasonable medical probability that the incidents that occurred in the performance of duty also contributed to the development of her depression." In response to a question as to whether he believed her emotional condition was self-generated or preexisting, Dr. Reddy noted it was likely her job dissatisfaction as well as disappointment and preexisting personality were contributing to her current psychiatric problem. He indicated that the medical status examination and Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) established that appellant was experiencing significant depression and anxiety. Dr. Reddy noted several factors impacted on appellant's disability, identifying her job dissatisfaction as well as disappointment and preexisting personality as contributing to her current condition. He opined appellant was totally disabled due to her depression.

In an April 13, 2005 decision, the Board found that appellant met her burden of proof to establish that she sustained an emotional condition in the performance of duty and reversed a March 10, 2004 decision denying her claim.³ The Board found the opinion of Dr. Reddy established that her depression was causally related to the accepted factor of employment. The Board remanded the case to the Office to make a determination as to the nature and extent of any disability due to her accepted emotional condition.

On remand the Office accepted the claim for a depressive disorder.

In a June 3, 2005 letter, appellant requested that the Office expand the acceptance of her emotional condition claim to include generalized anxiety disorder and multiple phobias. She noted that these conditions had been included in the diagnoses given by Dr. Reddy.

¹ This was assigned claim number 11-2007176. The Board notes that appellant had previously filed a claim for carpal tunnel syndrome, which the Office accepted and assigned claim number 11-0182040.

² Docket No. 03-1447 (issued December 4, 2003).

³ Docket No. 04-1197 (issued April 13, 2005).

By decision dated June 27, 2005, the Office denied appellant's request to expand her claim to include the conditions of generalized anxiety disorder and multiple phobias as the medical evidence failed to establish that these conditions were causally related to the accepted employment factor.

LEGAL PRECEDENT

To establish a causal relationship between the condition as well as any attendant disability claimed and the employment injury, an employee must submit rationalized medical evidence based on a complete medical and factual background supporting such a causal relationship.⁴ Causal relationship is a medical issue and the medical evidence required to establish a causal relationship is rationalized medical evidence.⁵ Rationalized medical evidence is 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.⁶ 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.⁷ Neither the mere fact that a disease or condition manifests itself during a period of employment nor the belief that the disease or condition was caused or aggravated by employment factors or incidents is sufficient to establish causal relationship.⁸

ANALYSIS

The Office accepted appellant's claim for depression based upon a March 2, 2004 report by Dr. Reddy. Appellant subsequently requested that her generalized anxiety disorder and multiple phobias also be accepted on the grounds that these conditions were diagnosed by Dr. Reddy in his March 2, 2004 report. Dr. Reddy noted that appellant's medical history included the diagnoses of multiple phobias and generalized anxiety disorder in his March 2, 2004 report, but he provided no opinion as to whether these conditions were caused or aggravated by the accepted employment factor. When asked whether appellant had an emotional condition as a result of the compensable factor, Dr. Reddy attributed only her depression to the accepted factor. In response to a question as to whether appellant's condition was self-generated or preexisting, he noted her "current medical status examination and MMPI show that the claimant is experiencing significant depression and anxiety." At no point did Dr. Reddy opine that appellant's generalized anxiety disorder was caused or aggravated by her employment. The only

⁴ *John D. Jackson*, 55 ECAB ___ (Docket No. 03-2281, issued April 8, 2004).

⁵ *Mary J. Summers*, 55 ECAB ___ (Docket No. 04-704, issued September 29, 2004); *Jacqueline M. Nixon-Steward*, 52 ECAB 140 (2000).

⁶ *Bobbie F. Cowart*, 55 ECAB ___ (Docket No. 04-1416, issued September 30, 2004).

⁷ *Phillip L. Barnes*, 55 ECAB ___ (Docket No. 02-1441, issued March 31, 2004); *Leslie C. Moore*, 52 ECAB 132 (2000).

⁸ *Ernest St. Pierre*, 51 ECAB 623 (2000).

condition he specifically found employment related was her depression. Appellant has not established that her generalized anxiety condition should be accepted by the Office.

Appellant contends that the diagnosis of multiple phobias should be an accepted condition. The Board finds that the evidence of record fails to establish an employment-related relationship. Dr. Reddy noted that appellant's medical history included the diagnoses multiple phobias and generalized anxiety disorder, but he provided no opinion as to whether these conditions were caused or aggravated by the accepted employment factor. Dr. Reddy explained from a medical perspective the nature of the relationship between appellant's diagnosed conditions of depression and anxiety and the established incident or factor of employment. However, he did not find a relationship between appellant's multiple phobias and the compensable factor. The fact that Dr. Reddy noted a medical history of diagnosed multiple phobias, without more by way of medical rationale explaining a causal connection, does not establish that this condition was caused or aggravated by appellant's employment and is sufficient to establish causal relationship.⁹ Appellant has not established that her multiple phobias should be accepted by the Office.

CONCLUSION

The Board finds that appellant has not established that her accepted condition of depression should be expanded to include the diagnoses of anxiety and multiple phobias.

⁹ See *Phillip L. Barnes*, 55 ECAB ____ (Docket No. 02-1441, issued March 31, 2004).

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs dated June 27, 2005 is affirmed.

Issued: April 3, 2006
Washington, DC

Alec J. Koromilas, Chief Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

David S. Gerson, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

Michael E. Groom, Alternate Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board