



bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome.<sup>1</sup> The March 15, 2006 Board decision is incorporated herein by reference.

On May 9, 2006 appellant requested reconsideration and submitted additional evidence. In an April 25, 2006 report, Dr. S. Vic Glogovac, an attending hand surgeon, stated that in 2004 appellant began experiencing numbness in his hands at work and he sometimes dropped objects. By early 2005, appellant had numbness and pain at night. Dr. Glogovac stated that June 13, 2005 findings on physical examination included a positive Phalen's test and abnormal two-point discrimination. He indicated that appellant underwent surgical decompression of the median nerve in both hands which resulted in significant improvement. Dr. Glogovac stated, "[appellant's] work activities were a significant factor in developing the symptomatology of the carpal tunnel syndrome."

By decision dated August 4, 2006, the Office denied modification of the prior decisions denying appellant's claim for bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome.

### **LEGAL PRECEDENT**

To establish a causal relationship between a claimant's medical conditions and his or her employment, the claimant must submit rationalized medical opinion evidence based on a complete factual and medical background supporting such a causal relationship.<sup>2</sup> Rationalized medical opinion evidence is medical evidence which includes a physician's opinion on the issue of whether there is a causal relationship between the claimant's 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> Neither the 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.<sup>4</sup>

### **ANALYSIS**

Dr. Glogovac diagnosed bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome for which appellant underwent surgery. He stated that appellant's work activities were a significant factor in the development of his condition. However, Dr. Glogovac provided insufficient rationalized medical opinion explaining how his bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome was caused or aggravated by his

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<sup>1</sup> Docket No. 06-328 (issued March 15, 2006). On May 25, 2005 appellant, a medical technologist, submitted a claim for bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome. By decisions dated August 5 and October 21, 2005, the Office denied his claim. (R 69-72)

<sup>2</sup> *Michael S. Mina*, 57 ECAB \_\_\_\_ (Docket No. 05-1763, issued February 7, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> *Gary J. Watling*, 52 ECAB 278 (2001); *Gloria J. McPherson*, 51 ECAB 441 (2000).

<sup>4</sup> *Michael S. Mina*, *supra* note 2.

employment as a medical technologist. He did not describe the specific duties appellant performed or explain how his work caused or contributed to the diagnosed condition or need for surgery. Medical reports not containing adequate rationale on causal relationship are of diminished probative value and are generally insufficient to meet an employee's burden of proof.<sup>5</sup> Lacking sufficient medical rationale addressing the issue of causal relationship, Dr. Glogovac's report is not sufficient to establish that appellant's bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome was caused or aggravated by his employment.

**CONCLUSION**

The Board finds that appellant failed to establish that his bilateral carpal tunnel syndrome was causally related to factors of his federal employment.

**ORDER**

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT** the decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs dated August 4, 2006 is affirmed.

Issued: December 20, 2006  
Washington, DC

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

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

James A. Haynes, Alternate Judge  
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

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<sup>5</sup> *Ceferino L. Gonzales*, 32 ECAB 1591 (1981).