

On May 22, 2007 the Office requested further information from appellant. In response, he submitted additional documents including range of motion charts. A March 23, 2007 x-ray report revealed a normal right wrist. In a March 23, 2007 chart note, Dr. Robert Coats, an orthopedic surgeon, diagnosed right de Quervain tenosynovitis. He noted that appellant had a history of severe pain in his right wrist for two weeks with radial and ulnar deviation of the wrist. In a May 2, 2007 chart note, Dr. Coats recommended light duty at work for six weeks.

On July 18, 2007 the Office denied appellant's claim on the grounds that the evidence did not establish that the claimed condition resulted from the employment activities.

LEGAL PRECEDENT

To establish that an injury was sustained in the performance of duty in an occupational disease claim, a claimant must submit the following: (1) medical evidence establishing the presence or existence of the disease or condition for which compensation is claimed; (2) a factual statement identifying employment factors alleged to have caused or contributed to the presence or occurrence of the disease or condition; and (3) medical evidence establishing that the diagnosed condition is causally related to the employment factors identified by the claimant.¹

The medical opinion needed to establish an occupational disease claim 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.²

The mere fact that a condition manifests itself during a period of employment does not raise an inference that there is a causal relationship between the condition and employment. Neither the fact that the condition became apparent during a period of employment, nor employee's belief that the condition was caused by or aggravated by employment conditions is sufficient to establish causal relationship.³

ANALYSIS

Appellant alleged that his right wrist condition, de Quervain tenosynovitis is causally related to his federal employment, specifically the repetitive use of his wrist in his work as a mail processor. The Office did not contest that appellant uses his wrists to handle mail. The issue therefore is whether the medical evidence is sufficient to establish that appellant's diagnosed de Quervain tenosynovitis is causally related to his employment.

The medical evidence submitted does not offer any opinion as to the cause of appellant's condition. Dr. Coats diagnosed de Quervain tenosynovitis but did not opine as to what caused this condition. He did not provide any explanation as to how appellant's job duties would cause or contribute to the diagnosed right wrist tenosynovitis. Medical evidence which does not offer

¹ *Elizabeth H. Kramm (Leonard O. Kramm)*, 57 ECAB ___ Docket No. 05-715 (issued October 6, 2005).

² *Donald W. Wenzel*, 56 ECAB 390 (2005).

³ *Alberta S. Williamson*, 47 ECAB 569 (1996).

any opinion regarding the cause of an employee's condition is of limited probative value on the issue of causal relationship.⁴

While appellant states that he believes his right wrist condition is related to his employment, the mere belief that the disease or condition was caused by employment factors is insufficient to establish a causal relationship between the two.⁵

The evidence of record is not sufficient to meet appellant's burden of proof to establish that his de Quervain tenosynovitis is causally related to his federal employment. The Board finds that appellant has submitted insufficient medical evidence to establish that he sustained a condition in the performance of duty.

CONCLUSION

The Board finds that appellant has not met his burden of proof to establish that he sustained an occupational disease in the performance of duty.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT the July 18, 2007 decision of the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs is affirmed.

Issued: March 3, 2008
Washington, DC

David S. Gerson, Judge
Employees' Compensation Appeals Board

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

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

⁴ *Michael E. Smith*, 50 ECAB 313 (1999).

⁵ *Dennis M. Mascarenas*, 49 ECAB 215, 218 (1997).