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Letter to the Editor re: You're the Flight Surgeon: Foot Drop

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the "You're the Flight Surgeon" article on foot drop by Patterson and Rosenthal and would like to offer one correction. The authors stated that "as of June 2017, the U.S. Air Force does not have published guidance specifically on peripheral neuropathies."¹ This was based on their review of the U.S. Air Force Waiver Guide.

The authors are correct that the U.S. Air Force Waiver Guide does not specifically mention peripheral neuropathies. However, the U.S. Air Force Medical Standards Directory, which is not readily accessible to nonmilitary members, has two standards that cover this condition. Standard L24 is disqualifying for military service retention and all flying classes and states, "Peripheral nerve injuries or conditions such as: Neuralgia, neuritis, radiculopathy or neuropathy, when symptoms are severe, persistent, and do not respond to treatment. Neuritis or paralysis due to peripheral nerve injury, when manifested by more than moderate, permanent functional impairment..."^{*} Standard L25 is similar, but is only disqualifying for all flying classes. It states: "Any current or history of neuritis, neuralgia, or neuropathy, unless the condition has completely subsided (with no residual effects) and the cause has been determined to be of no future aeromedical concern."^{*}

Applying these standards to the case reported by Patterson and Rosenthal, their patient would be covered under standard L25 if residual symptoms were not functionally limiting or standard L24 if there were permanent, significant motor sequelae. Applying either standard would result in the need for aeromedical waiver submission and approval prior to resumption of flying duties.

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The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

REFERENCE

1. Patterson A, Rosenthal J. You're the flight surgeon: foot drop. *Aerospace Med Hum Perform*. 2018; 89(2):151–153.

In Response:

At the time of submission of our case, we were not familiar with the U.S. Air Force Medical Standards Directory. We thank Dr. Hesselbrock for his input and correction to the case we presented.

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^{*}U.S. Air Force. Section L: neurologic USAF medical standards, L24 & L25. In: Medical standards directory (MSD). 2017:43. [Accessed 30 Jan. 2018]. Available from [https://kx2.afms.mil/kj/kx4/FlightMedicine/Documents/Medical%20Standards%20Directory%20\(MSD\)/MSD%2020170529.pdf](https://kx2.afms.mil/kj/kx4/FlightMedicine/Documents/Medical%20Standards%20Directory%20(MSD)/MSD%2020170529.pdf) to those with access.