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**A health survey of 640 airline crew members
(615 British Airways cabin crew, 14 cabin crew from other airlines and 11 pilots)**

12 June 2009

This is an ongoing survey and results will be updated from time to time. We would like as many currently serving pilots and cabin crew as possible to take part. You can use the online form on our website.

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A selection of comments from the health survey, each from a different crew member....

Since I started flying I have never felt so unwell. My quality of life has changed beyond recognition. My personality was always joyful and positive – I am so negative now and cannot shake off an impending sense of doom. I have constant headaches and cannot stop crying.

I feel that my health is quickly deteriorating. I fly on prescribed antidepressants and have less stamina and more short spells of sickness than ever before.

I have been very, very ill 5 years+. I have been very shabbily treated by my manager. There have been days I couldn't have told you what my name was! I suffer THE most horrendous pain in my joints and muscles. BA are now trying to terminate my contract.

I've had blood tests showing high levels of petroleum related chemicals, nickel, cadmium and damage to enzymes and mitochondria, neurological tests showing some damage to nerve endings and damage consistent to exposure to toxins.

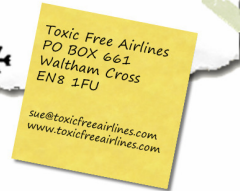
Flight Deck seem generally unwilling to report or investigate fumes. I suspect that Captains are being discouraged from using reporting procedure.

After working on the 777 prolonged leg aches of 2 days or more with severe headaches and nose bleeds usually 24 hours after flying.

Regular blood tests appeared to show that bloods were more abnormal after my working month and generally improved the month I wasn't working (part time).

I have had a few incidents whereby differing smells have been reported on several occasions. Fuel/oil most noticeably however one of the other smells that was particularly prevalent from time to time especially on older 747s was one of a burning electrical type.

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4 years ago I became ill with a bad wheezy chest which I put down to maybe a flu virus. I had never had flu before and rarely catch a cold. This illness lasted from March until I ended up in hospital in July. Asthma was diagnosed. I firmly believe it was caused by flying as these symptoms still affect me sometimes when I am on an aircraft.

I find my concentration levels are much lower since I've been flying. Although my doctor has diagnosed me with asthma I do not take any medication.

Constant tiredness and lack of co-ordination. Unable to think clearly, cannot concentrate.

Have been trying to have a baby for over 2 years and have been told by fertility specialist that there is nothing wrong with me! I always have constant colds especially when I do several early shifts in a row, I'm instantly run down. Have never been so ill since starting this job! !

Started flying in 2006 with a charter airline. Experienced some numbness in toes after approx 6 months of flying on the A330. Feeling of numbness faded away during 6 months away from flying. I then moved to BA. About 6 months ago the numb feeling came back along with intermittent muscle pains, always in the 24 hours after a long haul flight. I was referred to a neurologist by my GP, who found no signs of any muscle condition.

Midwife said she could not believe how many problems I had for my age (26). It was quite unusual.

Twice within last 6 months I've operated back to base horizontally, having spent the previous 24 hours with nausea and vomiting. These incidents have not been officially reported. Both times I was operating on B777.

Am off sick at the moment with unexplained pains in my chest and back, pains in my arms, out of breath by just going up the stairs, am seeing a thyroid specialist as blood tests show high level of hypothyroidism.

I often feel vaguely unwell on the 777 – dizzy and prone to headaches. Can quite often detect very faint acrid smell in the air.

Since operating on B777 aircraft I have suffered increasing respiratory problems (shortness of breath on board) and nose bleeds.

Unable to physically get out of bed some days...severe pain in arms and legs..chronic chronic fatigue ...struggle some days to remember my name. Typically after working sectors I felt as if coming down with flu. Quite often remember smelling fumes in bunk areas on 747 during crew rest.

I go to work sick so that I won't get pulled up by my manager. I love my job to pieces but I have put my name down for part time as my body has changed so much since I started flying.

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Diagnosed with Aerotoxic Syndrome. BA have denied any problems. Have noticed continued fuel smell on 767 on push back.

There is such a fear of reporting sick that many crew go in when they should not. I feel constantly tired, I also find that I often come down with sore throats and cold symptoms, particularly after being on the 777 aircraft. The crew often feel tired, dehydrated and sickly on this aircraft. I feel that it is amazing that airlines are prepared to use recycled and possibly toxic air in order to save money, rather than using fresh air in the cabin.

I have had the worst symptoms on Boeing 777 + 767. After about 10 minutes on board my nose and throat feel swollen and dry and I have severe dehydration. I no longer fly longhaul but while regularly on 777s I suffered terrible sleep disturbance, depression, mood swings, and a general feeling of being detached from life for about 1 year. I am also extremely worried about the numerous cases of cancer and infertility people suffer in this job and feel strongly that thorough research needs to take place.

I had toxic fumes on the Airbus 319 about 3 years ago, did not know what it was at the time till I saw a program on toxic fumes, had all the symptoms, sore eyes, nausea, hard to breathe, flight deck on oxygen feeling the same, company telling us if symptoms continue to go to hospital. Found out later that it was fumes from the oil filter (told by my manager.)

Despite being sick constantly with numerous complaints, because of the draconian sickness policy at british airways I am scared to call in sick and so go to work ill, so the body just seems to get worse and worse. Am in the process of having medical check ups to see whats wrong. The doctor is now sending for more liver and kidney tests.

Since flying on the 777 mostly feel short of breath, exhausted, aches in feet, legs and back, dry skin and nose bleeds, after flight constant sneezing. My lungs are still 100% toxic I cannot clear them. I have now been told my thyroid is failing.

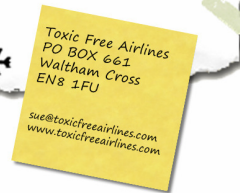
Whilst flying on 777 I find the majority of my symptoms appear. Constant running nose, headache, nose bleeds, joint pains especially in my knees and muscle weakness.

Headache after EVERY 777 flight sometimes bad sinus pain and dehydration even though I drink lots of water during the flight.

Over the last 2 yrs I have had bouts of vertigo which have increased in length each time. The last attack lasted for 7 weeks. On some occasions this has led to sudden loss of vision and blurred vision. I am currently awaiting the results of an MRI scan on my brain.

Feeling of dizziness on the 777. Very forgetful and often have a "not quite there" feeling.

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Was involved in a fumes incident flying into xxx, have never received any blood results from the clinic. The aircraft was carrying sodium selenite in the hold, when hold was opened the loading team were overcome by fumes. We have received nothing from BA about the cargo or our blood results.

Currently undergoing blood tests for a number of things including fatigue, diarrhoea, cholesterol level & full blood count. Stool sample came back clear indicating no infection.

Serious back pain as a result of flying.

At present I am suffering from acute throbbing pains in various parts of my body (shins, hands, arms) I have not been to my GP as I don't think they would be able to explain what is causing it and I would feel like a hypochondriac.

I have administered oxygen to myself on landing as I felt so dizzy and out of breath I feared for myself, I also know that many of my colleagues are sneaking puffs of oxygen as they feel faint, out of breath and dizzy but have been sick so often they are afraid of reporting sick for duty due to airline supervisors pressure and threats and lack of sick pay.

Headache on or just after every sector on 777.

Recurrent sore throats, lasts for about 4 weeks at a time and frequent sinus infections.

Ever since I started flying I have noticed that I experience extreme fatigue after flying duties. I have also suffered ongoing sinus problems and an increase in contracting cold and flu viruses and I am convinced this is related to flying. Over the years I have noticed an impairment in simple mental processes such as memory, mental arithmetic and sometimes even finding the words to speak! Before flying I considered myself fairly intelligent and articulate and educated to degree level. I am sure that lack of oxygen/poor air quality/cosmic radiation/increased cabin pressure/ other factors has contributed to my decrease in mental and physical wellbeing and I really do hope further research and help for those affected will be conducted in this area.

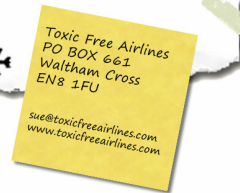
I collapsed at work and was rushed to hospital after landing. I had been on the 777.

Have had more sinus ops than I can remember since I started flying. Nose always worse on 777 always bleeds when I blow it, all symptoms worse on 777, dryness, tiredness, dizziness etc.

777 particularly bad. Every single trip on this aircraft I have at least 1 nosebleed and my eyes are always bloodshot. This takes about 24 hours after operating to clear.

I just get on with it at work, I don't want anyone to notice how I really feel.

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Over the years my memory has become worse in all areas. I find it difficult to concentrate, I suffer more frequently from dizziness and imbalance. I find it more difficult to find the right words more and more every day.

I have been suffering with many of these symptoms over the past 3 years especially. The company I work for are constantly telling me that I am the only one with a problem, but I know of others who are too afraid to speak out. Two flight crew have been incapacitated recently. My GP is worried for my health. I was made an example of last year as I kept reporting problems and submitted an Air Safety Report. This led to me being grounded for 6 months as a warning to the other crew to keep quiet! Also, the flight crew will not put anything to do with fumes in the tech log.

Have had 2 fume events so far within a year. Both on old Airbus A320 during engine start up. Previously on Concorde we thought the DAILY occurrence of noxious fumes on engine start up was usual.

Under specialist for very poor memory, hospital said there is very strong evidence of quite rapid memory loss/deterioration there is no underlying reason for it that they could find.

My skin condition which appeared 3 years ago out of the blue, has started coming back, which is strange as I have been off for 15 months on maternity leave, where skin problem seemed to have cleared, but since back at work 3 months ago seems to be returning. A type of eczema.

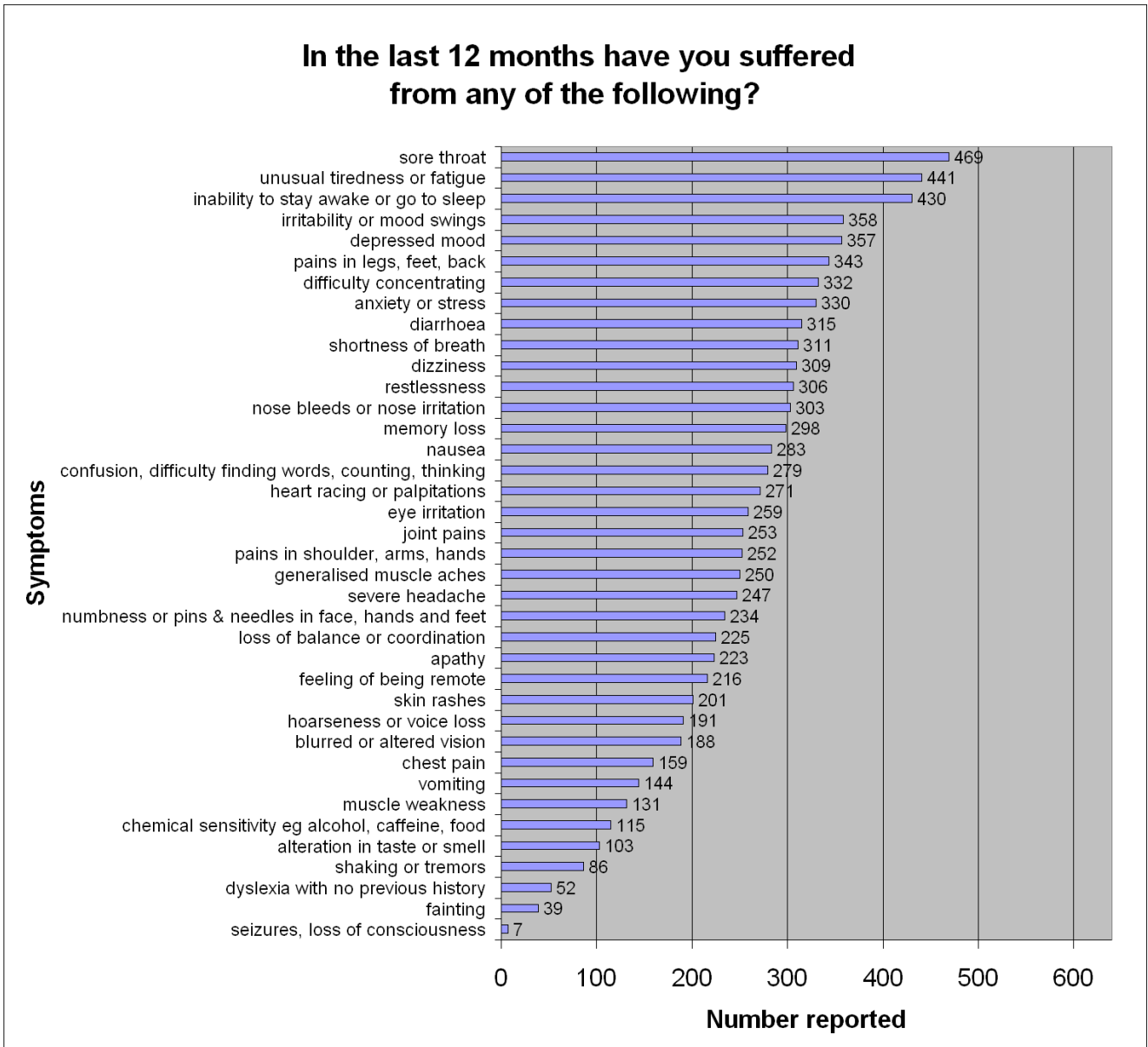
All my allergy and auto-immune tests have come back negative. My Consultant says he believes I am an "intrinsically healthy person" and all my health problems have been caused by "external factors." My GP believes all my health problems have been caused by flying and has written Aerotoxic Syndrome on my medical certificate. I have been on sick leave for over a year and BA has threatened to terminate my contract on 3 occasions. If I can't recover and go back to work I will lose my home and everything I have spent my life working for. I thought there were employment laws designed to protect workers from this sort of thing. Why isn't anyone helping us?

Never been so ill since started flying. Had operation to clear sinus. Diagnosed asthmatic. Blocked ears. Chest infection approx 5 times. Diagnosed to have allergies.(Been flying 2 years.)

I started to suffer constant headaches, whilst flying on shorthaul for just over a year. Most days we were, especially on early morning flights on 757, subjected to fumes in the cabin...a lot of it and when asked we were told, by the Flight Deck that it was normal due to start up of APU. My IBS/headaches, along with very weak legs, just got worse. A few years later I suffered a brain haemorrhage and I had to have 2 operations. Every day I still suffer from headaches and severe back/leg pain. I have now been given a walking stick, a blue badge and was awarded DLA due to my health and mobility problems. I used to be a fit, healthy and vibrant person, until I started my flying career, I feel like an old lady now ...and I'm not! (Aged 37) My flying career has left me partially disabled. I have nearly died from it.

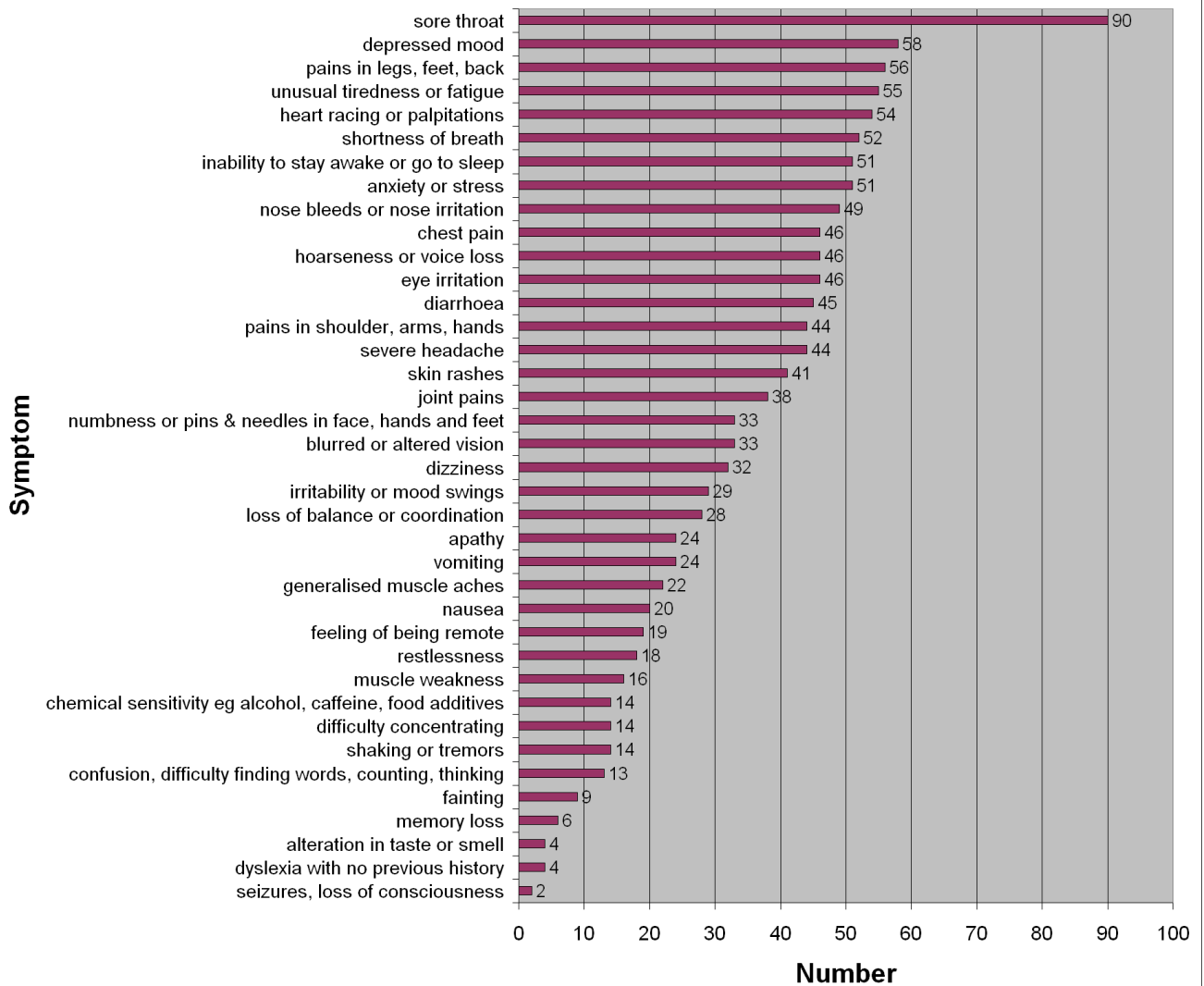


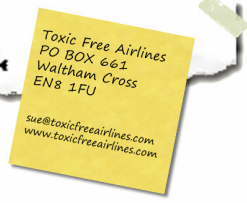
Survey results



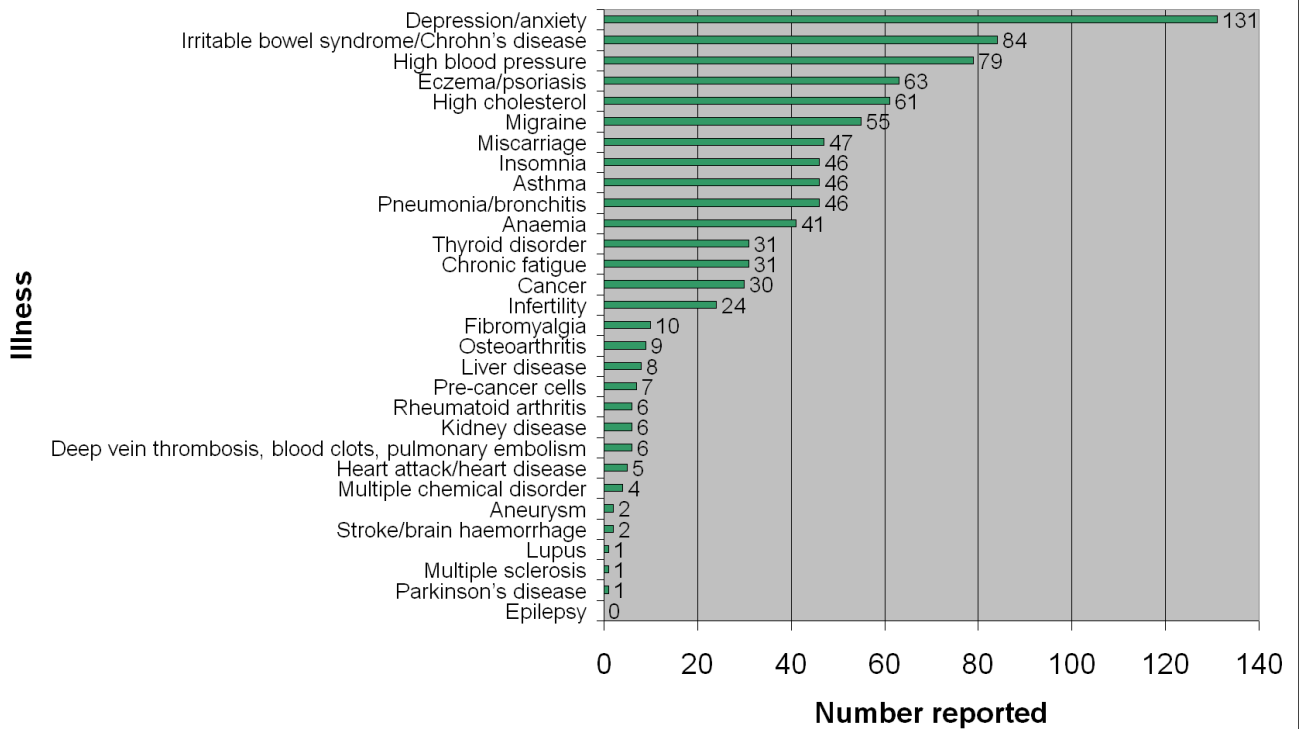


Number who sought medical help for their symptoms

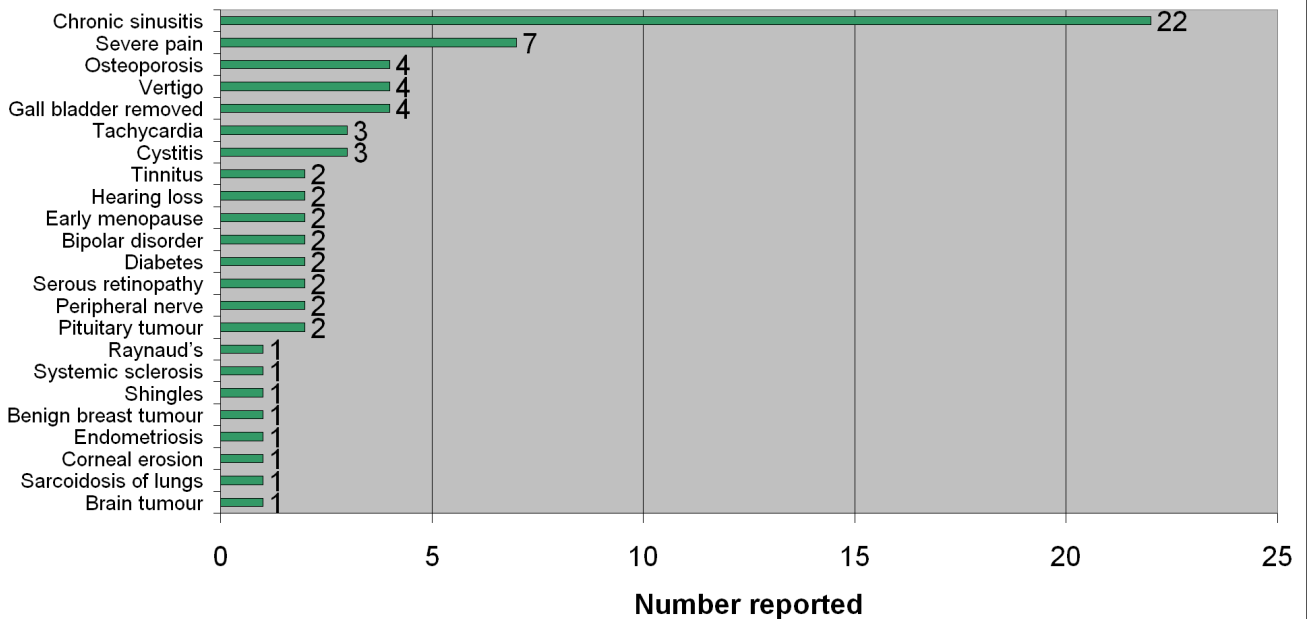


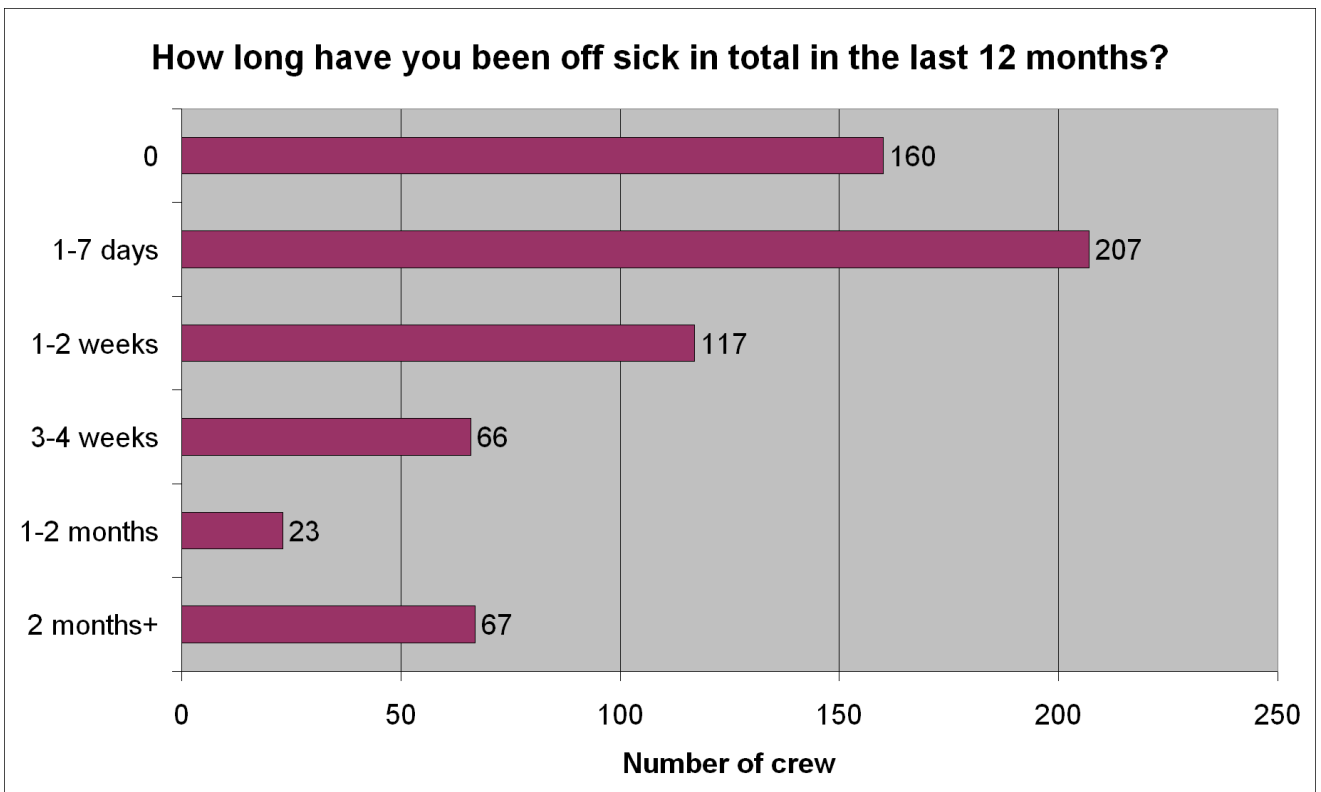
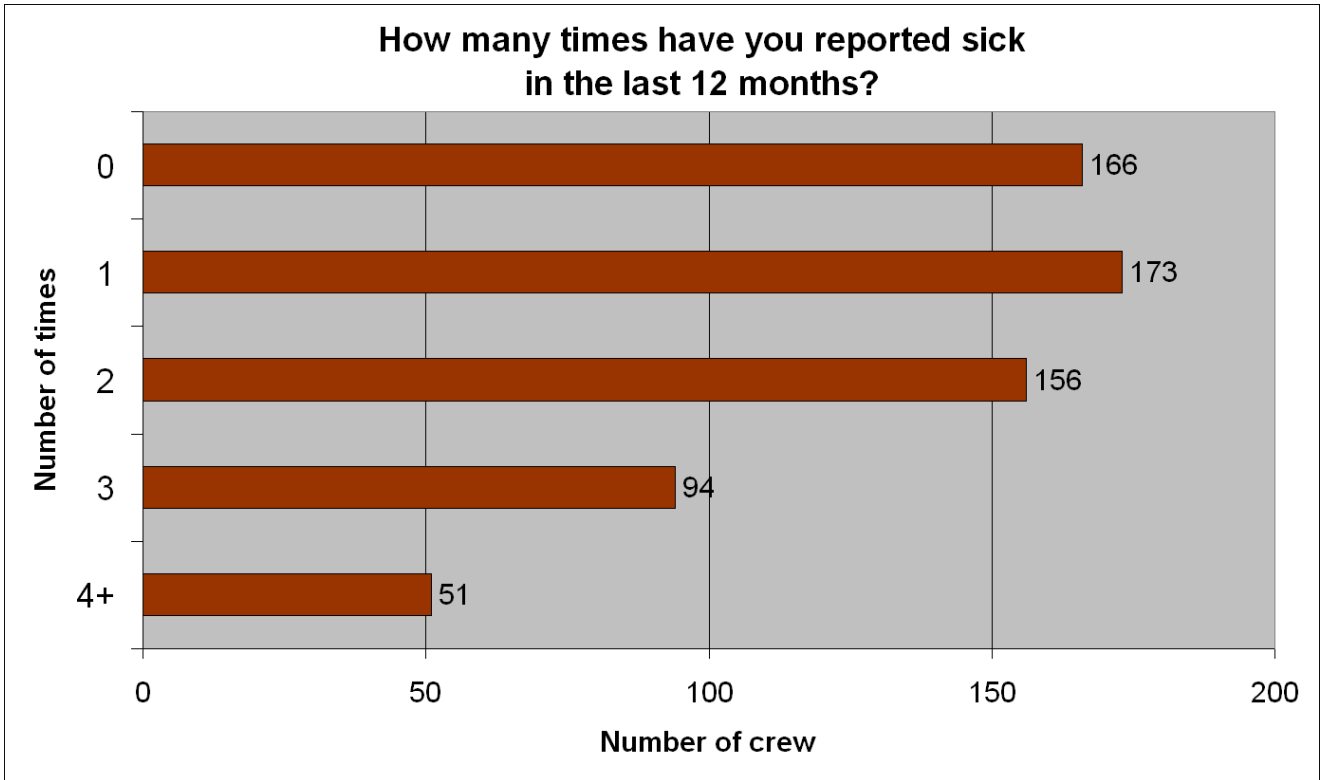


Have you been diagnosed with any of the following since you started flying?



Other illnesses





Summary

Out of the 640 health surveys received 9 had no symptoms and had not been diagnosed with any illness.

Some crew told us they had not reported sick but were ill on days off, leave or part time weeks. Some said they went to work when they didn't feel well as they were afraid of the absence management process.

A surprising number of crew members still in their twenties have significant health problems and some have been flying less than 2 years.

1 in 8 say they have been diagnosed with high blood pressure

1 in 5 say they have been diagnosed with depression/anxiety

1 in 7 say they have been diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome

1 in 20 say they have been diagnosed with a thyroid disorder

1 in 20 say they have been diagnosed with chronic fatigue

SupportME say when all findings are taken into account the incidence of CFS in the UK is likely to be 1-2 cases per thousand.

1 in 21 have been diagnosed with cancer. This figure does not include those with pre-cancerous cells or those who said they have a tumour but did not specify if it was malignant.

The Health Survey will remain open indefinitely at www.toxicfreeairlines.com and these figures will be regularly updated as more surveys are received.