

Brazil Studies Harmful Radiation in Airplanes

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An unprecedented study conducted by the Brazilian Air Force's Center for Aerospace Medicine (Cemal) is evaluating whether aircraft cabins may be receiving a very large quantity of radiation.

This possibility is raised by the fact that airplanes are flying at increasingly higher altitudes, together with the detrimental effects of greenhouse gases on the ozone layer.

The study was debated for the first time at the VII Aerospace Medicine Meeting, which ended on October 2 at Cemal headquarters in Rio de Janeiro.

The Cemal is considered one of the world's principal centers of excellence in the field of aerospace medicine.

The Cemal study indicates that ultraviolet radiation and its effects on aircraft crews have aroused the interest of the international scientific community.

According to the study, cataracts and skin cancer are among the human diseases that can be caused by excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation.

According to Brigadier-General Dr. José Roberto Gabriel, the Cemal wants, through this study, to quantify pilots' exposure levels in order to calculate the incidence of radiation they receive.

"Based on this study, we shall be able to establish a flight staff protection policy to avert health problems."

The first stage of the study has already been completed, and, based on the results, Cemal researchers were surprised when they analyzed tests of glass used in aircraft cabin windows and windshields.

"Among other findings, up to then unknown to the world, it was clear that the windows have a very high level of radiation transmittance, leaving pilots overexposed to the extremely harmful consequences this radiation can produce in human beings," the Brigadier said.

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