

MARIA E. MANAHAN, PETITIONER, VS. EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION COMMISSION AND GSIS (LAS PIÑAS MUNICIPAL HIGH SCHOOL), RESPONDENTS.

G.R. No. L-44899. April 22, 1981

Ponente: FERNANDEZ, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/f5f16f323ad3/>

FERNANDEZ, J.:

This is a petition to review the decision of the Employees' Compensation Commission in ECC Case No. 0070 (Nazario Manahan, Jr., deceased), entitled "Maria Manahan, Appellant, versus Government Service Insurance System, (Las Piñas Municipal High School), Respondent" affirming the decision of the Government Service Insurance System which denied the claim for death benefit.[1]

The claimant, petitioner herein, Maria E. Manahan, is the widow of Nazario Manahan, Jr., who died of "Enteric Fever" while employed as classroom teacher in Las Piñas Municipal High School, Las Piñas, Rizal, on May 8, 1975.

The petitioner filed a claim with the Government Service Insurance System for death benefit under Presidential Decree 626. In a letter dated June 19, 1975, the Government Service Insurance denied the claim on a finding that the ailment of Nazario Manahan, Jr., typhoid fever, is not an occupational disease.

The petitioner filed a motion for reconsideration on the ground that the deceased, Nazario Manahan, Jr., was in perfect health when admitted to the service and that the ailment of said deceased was attributable to his employment.

The Government Service Insurance System affirmed the denial of the claim on the ground that enteric fever or paratyphoid is similar in effect to typhoid fever, in the sense that both are produced by Salmonella organisms.

The petitioner appealed to the Employees' Compensation Commission which affirmed the decision of the Government Service Insurance System on a finding that the ailment of the deceased, enteric fever, was not induced by or aggravated by the nature of the duties of Nazario Manahan, Jr. as a teacher.[2]

To support her theory that the disease of Nazario Manahan, Jr., enteric fever, resulted from his employment as classroom teacher of the Las Piñas Municipal High School, the petitioner cites the following authority:

"EPIDEMIOLOGY AND PATHOLOGY OF ENTERIC FEVER

"THE SOURCE OF INFECTION is feces or urine from patients and carriers. Family contacts may be transient carriers and 2 to 5% of patients become chronic carriers. In poorly sanitized communities, water is the most frequent vehicle of transmission; food, especially milk, is the next most important. In modern urban areas, food, contaminated by healthy carriers who are food handlers, is the principal vehicle. Flies may spread the organism from feces to food. Direct contact infection is infrequent.

"The organism enters the body through the gastrointestinal tract, invading the blood stream by way of the

lymphatic channels. There is hyperplasia and often ulceration of Peyer's patches, especially in the ileum and cecum. When the ulcers heal, no scar results. The kidneys and liver usually show cloudy swelling and the latter may reveal a patchy necrosis. The spleen is enlarged and soft. Rarely, the lungs show pneumonic changes. (Merck Manual, 10th Edit., P. 842)"[3]

The factual findings of the respondent Commission indicate that the deceased was in perfect health when he entered government service on July 20, 1969, and that in the course of his employment in 1974, he was treated for epigastric pain. He succumbed to enteric fever on May 8, 1975.

Enteric fever is referred to in medical books as typhoid fever (Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary, 24th Ed., p. 548) or paratyphoid fever (Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine, 6th Ed., p. 817). Its symptoms include abdominal pain (id., p. 810). In discussing the clinical manifestations of the disease, Mr. Harrison states that recovery (from enteric or paratyphoid fever) may be followed by continued excretion of the causative organism in the stools for several months (id., p. 817). This lingering nature of the species producing enteric fever points out the possibility that the illness which afflicted the deceased in 1974 was the same as, or at least, related to, his 1975 illness.

The medical record of the deceased shows that he had a history of ulcer-like symptoms (p. 3, ECC rec.). This buttresses the claimant's claim that her husband had been suffering from ulcer several months before his death on May 8, 1975. This is likewise sustained by the medical certificate (p. 12, ECC rec.) issued by Dr. Aquilino Bernabe to the effect that "Nazario Manahan was treated for epigastric pain probably due to hyperacidity on December 10, 1974." Epigastric pain is a symptom of ulcer, and ulcer is a common complication of typhoid fever. There is even such a thing as "typhoidal ulcer" (p. 812, supra).

Because of these circumstances, the illness that claimed the life of the deceased could have had its onset months before December 10, 1974. Such being the case, his cause of action accrued before December 10, 1974.

In the case of *Corales vs. ECC* (L-44063, Feb. 27, 1979), We ruled that:

"x x Article 294, Title III (Transitory and Final Provisions) of the New Labor Code provides that all actions and claims accruing prior to the effectivity of this Code shall be determined in accordance with the laws in force at the time of their accrual and under the third paragraph of Article 292, Title II (Prescription of Offenses and Claims), workmen's compensation claims accruing prior to the effectivity of this Code and during the period from November 1, 1974 up to December 31, 1974 shall be processed and adjudicated in accordance with the laws and rules at the time their causes of action accrued. Hence, this Court applied the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act, as amended, on passing upon petitioner's claim."

Pursuant to such doctrine and applying now the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act in this case, the presumption of compensability subsists in favor of the claimant.

In any case, We have always maintained that in case of doubt, the same should be resolved in favor of the worker, and that social legislations -- like the Workmen's Compensation Act and the Labor Code -- should be liberally construed to attain their laudable objective, i.e., to give relief to the workman and/or his dependents in the event that the former should die or sustain an injury.

Moreover, the constitutional guarantee of social justice and protection to labor make Us take a second look at the evidence presented by the claimant.

As a teacher of the Las Piñas Municipal High School at Las Piñas, Rizal, the deceased used to eat his meals at the school canteen. He also used the toilet and other facilities of the school. Said the respondent Commission, "x x x it is not improbable that the deceased might have contracted the illness during those rare moments that he was away

from his family, since it is medically accepted that enteric fever is caused by 'salmonella' organisms which are acquired by ingestion of contaminated food or drinks. Contamination of food or water may come from the excretion of animals such as rodents, flies, or human beings who are sick or who are carriers, or infection in meat of animals as food. Meat, milk and eggs are the foods most frequently involved in the transmission of this type of species, since the organism may multiply even before ingestion x x x." These findings of the respondent Commission lead to the conclusion that the risk of contracting the fatal illness was increased by the decedent's working condition.

In view of the foregoing, the petition for review is meritorious.

WHEREFORE, the decision of the Employees' Compensation Commission sought to be reviewed is hereby set aside the Government Service Insurance System is ordered:

1. To pay the petitioner the amount of SIX THOUSAND PESOS (P6,000.00) as death compensation benefit;
2. To pay the petitioner the amount of SIX HUNDRED PESOS (P600.00) as attorney's fees;
3. To reimburse the petitioner expenses incurred for medical services, hospitalization and medicines of the deceased Nazario Manahan, Jr., duly supported by proper receipts; and
4. To pay administrative fees.

SO ORDERED.

Teehankee, (Chairman), Makasiar, Guerrero, and De Castro JJ., concur.

Melencio-Herrera, J., concurs. Although enteric fever is not occupational disease, considering the cause of said illness, the risk of contracting it could have been increased by the working conditions of the deceased, a teacher, who used to eat his meals at the school canteen and used the comfort room and other facilities of the school.

[1] Rollo, pp. 25-27.

[2] Idem.

[3] Rollo, p. 20.

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.