

APPEAL NO. 010976
FILED JUNE 18, 2001

This appeal arises pursuant to the Texas Workers' Compensation Act, TEX. LAB. CODE ANN. § 401.001 *et seq.* (1989 Act). A contested case hearing was held on April 11, 2001. With respect to the single issue before him, the hearing officer determined that the appellant's (claimant) compensable injury of _____, does not extend to or include an injury to the cervical spine. In his appeal, the claimant essentially argues that the hearing officer's extent-of-injury determination is against the great weight of the evidence. In its response to the claimant's appeal, the respondent (carrier) urges affirmance.

DECISION

Affirmed.

The hearing officer did not err in determining that the claimant's compensable injury did not extend to the cervical spine. Extent of injury is a question of fact. Texas Workers' Compensation Commission Appeal No. 93613, decided August 24, 1993. Section 410.165(a) provides that the contested case hearing officer, as finder of fact, is the sole judge of the relevance and materiality of the evidence as well as of the weight and credibility that is to be given the evidence. It was for the hearing officer, as trier of fact, to resolve the inconsistencies and conflicts in the evidence and to determine what facts the evidence has established. Garza v. Commercial Insurance Company of Newark, New Jersey, 508 S.W.2d 701, 702 (Tex. Civ. App.-Amarillo 1974, no writ). When reviewing a hearing officer's decision for sufficiency of the evidence, we should reverse such decision only if it is so contrary to the overwhelming weight of the evidence as to be clearly wrong or manifestly unjust. Cain v. Bain, 709 S.W.2d 175, 176 (Tex. 1986). In this instance, the hearing officer was not persuaded that the claimant sustained his burden of proving that his compensable injury of _____, extended to and included a cervical injury. The hearing officer resolved the conflicts and inconsistencies in the evidence against the claimant and he was acting within his province as the fact finder in so doing. Nothing in our review of the record demonstrates that the hearing officer's determination that the claimant's compensable injury does not extend to or include the cervical spine is so against the great weight of the evidence as to be clearly wrong or manifestly unjust. Therefore, no sound basis exists for us to disturb the hearing officer's extent-of-injury determination on appeal.

The hearing officer's decision and order are affirmed.

Elaine M. Chaney
Appeals Judge

CONCUR:

Judy L. S. Barnes
Appeals Judge

Michael B. McShane
Appeals Judge