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## Dengvaxia probe: Forensics find pattern in children's deaths

## By ROMINA CABRERA

The forensics team of the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) has noted a pattern in the remains of three children who died several months after they were given the anti-dengue

vaccine Dengvaxia last year.
PAO chief Persida Acosta
yesterday said they have autopsied three children as of
Sunday, and that two more
bodies are expected to be examined today.

The PAO team examined the bodies of two boys from San Pablo City, Laguna and Imus, Cavite at the request of their families.

The boy from San Pablo, who died on Nov. 9, had to be exhumed for autopsy.

The boy from Imus, who died on Dec. 27, has yet to be buried.

A 10-year-old girl from Quezon City was the first to be examined by the PAO experts.

PAO forensics laboratory chief Erwin Erfe said enlarged organs, extensive bleeding and rapid progression of disease were observed in the bodies.

"What is clear is there is a trend – rapid progression of the disease leading to death. These three cases occurred less than six months after the children were given the vaccine," Erfe said in an interview in mixed Filipino and English.

He said lupus and a ruptured appendix were cited as the cause of death of the girl and the boy from Imus, respectively.

Erfe, however, thinks otherwise. He said health officials seemed to have not properly vetted the effects of the Dengvaxia before the vaccine was introduced to the public.

Acosta said they have two other cases, wherein severe dengue was believed to be the cause of death. One of them will be examined today in Bataan.

Some officials in the administration of former president Benigno Aquino III have been charged for the Dengvaxia fiasco.

Health Undersecretary Eric Domingo said they would ask the PAO to share with them the information gathered from the autopsy of the children.

"We want to know the causes of death of these children and if their death is associated or related to the dengue vaccine. If there are autopsy findings, that would really be very helpful," Domingo said.

- With Sheila Crisostomo

\* VACCINATION