

# Dengvaxia case:

## Boy's death raised awareness

**By Maricar Cinco  
and Julie M. Aurelio**  
@Team\_Inquirer

SAN PEDRO CITY—The death of a boy who had been inoculated with the controversial Dengvaxia vaccine has raised awareness of the situation and may help prevent deaths, the boy's father said on Saturday.

Ian Colite, a security guard from Imus City in Cavite province, said parents of children who were inoculated by the Department of Health (DOH) should be mindful of their children's health.

Colite said he immediately brought his son Zandro to the hospital in the afternoon of Dec. 26 when the boy complained of stomach pain followed by rashes and a fever.

"We rushed him to the hospital. The next day he was gone," the 34-year-old Colite said. Doctors told Colite that his son died of a ruptured appendix.

### Forensic findings

"[But] we couldn't believe it [was appendicitis]. He was a healthy boy, never ill," Colite said, adding he had forensic doctors from the Public Attorney's Office (PAO) examined the boy's body.

PAO Forensic Laboratory director, Dr. Erwin Erfe, said they

found bleeding in Zandro's brain, lungs, heart and liver. The boy also had enlarged organs.

The symptoms were similar to those seen in other children who died after being inoculated with Dengvaxia.

Zandro was one of more

than 830,000 students who received the vaccine between 2016 and 2017. Erfe said around 400 families were seeking help from the government.

"Most of them are poor," Erfe said. "It's a problem where to find money for the fare to go

to our office."

But the parents of Zandro's classmates are scrambling to get medical attention for their children and the PAO has had to refer 23 children to Philippine Children's Medical Center after showing similar signs of rashes,

fever and body weakness.

"I'd like to think that my son's death somehow (raised) awareness in our place," he said.

Aside from Zandro, the PAO has examined the bodies of six other children inoculated with

Dengvaxia, as of Friday.

### More similar cases

The latest two were a 10-year-old boy from Bagac and an

11-year-old girl from Mariveles, both in Bataan. The bodies were exhumed and examined on Thursday.

The boy was inoculated on March 31, 2016. He died 11 days later after developing high fever and his body growing weak.

The girl from Mariveles, on the other hand, showed bleeding in the brain, heart and intestinal tract, Erfe added.

Sanofi Pasteur, the maker of the controversial vaccine, sought a meeting with the DOH after it received a demand to reimburse the P 1.4 billion paid for the vaccines.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III earlier said he addressed the demand letter to Sanofi Pasteur's head for Asia-Pacific Thomas Triomphe.

Aside from the refund, Duque said the DOH also wanted Sanofi Pasteur to conduct a sero-testing of the inoculated children to determine if they had previous dengue infections.

In addition, the DOH also asked for documents on all ongoing clinical trials and other studies involving Dengvaxia in the Philippines. INQ

VACCINE - DENGVA-X19