

Child's Flu Death Prompts Criminal Investigation

By [The Moscow Times](#)

February 21, 2013

The  Moscow Times

The Investigative Committee opened a criminal case in connection with the death of an 11-year-old girl in the Moscow region who may have died as a result of an apparent misdiagnosis, a statement published on the committee's website Thursday said.

The girl died on Sunday in intensive care after undergoing three days of treatment for what was first diagnosed as an acute respiratory infection, Interfax reported.

She was first examined by a doctor on Feb. 10 at the Dmitrov city hospital, where she was given medication for the infection. She was examined again two days later and given more medication.

Later that night, the statement says, her condition worsened and she was hospitalized in intensive care.

The Federal Consumer Protection Service said on its website Wednesday that preliminary tests showed that the child actually had swine flu, though that has not yet been confirmed, according to Nina Suslonova, health minister for the Moscow region.

Suslonova told Interfax on Wednesday that tests were still being conducted to determine whether the young girl was infected with the strain of the virus found in pigs or the more common human strain of the virus.

Swine flu, a respiratory infection, is considered more dangerous than the human flu virus because it requires different treatment and tends to lead to complications, especially pneumonia. The Center for Disease Control has also warned that the virus is constantly developing, rendering it extremely difficult to create vaccinations for.

Doctors reportedly diagnosed the 11-year-old girl with an acute respiratory infection three times prior to her hospitalization, and later bilateral pneumonia, Interfax reported. Although she was given medication for those illnesses, it would not have been effective against swine flu.

Investigators opened a criminal case on the charge of causing death by negligence as a result of improper performance of professional duties, which carries a maximum sentence of three years in prison. "As part of the criminal investigation, the actions of the medical staff who examined and treated the girl will be legally assessed," investigators said.

Just last week, an 8-year-old boy died from swine flu in a suburb of Moscow. Suslonova, the health minister, told Interfax on Wednesday that checks were being conducted into both cases. She said that although there is no reason to "talk about an epidemic" in the Moscow region, people nonetheless need to be "put on the alert" and "told to take care of their children."

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