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Investigators Probe Feared Syphilis Outbreak in Russian Orphanage

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Russian investigators are looking into a potential outbreak of syphilis at an orphanage in the Sverdlovsk region after a girl was diagnosed with the venereal disease, Russian news agency TASS reported Thursday.

"All the circumstances will be investigated, how she got the disease and with whom she had contact and whether they were infected," Maxim Chalkov, a regional spokesman for Russia's Investigative Committee, told TASS.

The girl in question is 17 years old and has had at least 10 sexual partners within the children's institution in the central Russian Urals region, according to local news website Ura.ru.

As well as the entire orphanage, at least 40 youths from a local college are also being tested for syphilis, Ura.ru said.

There are almost 100,000 children living in Russia's orphanage system, where many suffer chronic institutionalization and turn to drugs, crime or prostitution when they leave aged 18.

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