

Third victim dies from rare form of meningitis Sunday

AUSTIN (AP) — A Houston-area boy who had been swimming in a Central Texas lake has become the third child fatality from a rare form of meningitis in the past month.

The 9-year-old boy died Sunday after skiing and swimming in Lake Travis near Austin the previous weekend, according to state health officials.

The victim had been with his family during the Aug. 11 weekend at Lake Travis. The lake was the last body of water the boy swam in before he died, health officials said.

Officials did not know what part of the lake the family visit-

ed. They declined to identify the boy, citing medical confidentiality.

Lower Colorado River Authority officials said they were aware of no previous cases involving the lake, northwest of Austin.

"Lake Travis is a very unlikely source of infection in general because the organism is usually found in more shallow water where the water is standing," Dr. Steven Harris of the Austin-Travis County Health Department told the *Austin American-Statesman* in Tuesday's editions.

Earlier this month, a Tyler-area girl died after swimming in Lake Hawkins and Lake

Palestine near Tyler. A Dallas-area boy died after swimming in Cedar Creek Lake southeast of Dallas.

All the victims died from primary amoebic meningoencephalitis, which is caused by a common amoeba found in almost all untreated surface water and in soil, health officials said.

State health officials continued Monday to warn people about activities in lakes, rivers, stock ponds and bodies of stagnant water.

But a Texas Department of Health report states the probability of becoming infected is less than 1 in 100 million.

The last time anyone died

from the disease after swimming in Travis County was in 1980, when a 23-year-old woman contracted it in Lake Austin, said Neil Pascoe, a nurse epidemiologist with the Texas Department of Health.

Infection is believed to occur when the water containing the microorganism is forced into the nasal passages, usually when diving or jumping into the water or skiing, and the amoeba then enters the brain and spinal cord.

Symptoms include severe headaches, high fever, stiff neck, nausea, vomiting, seizures and hallucinations. The disease is almost always fatal.

Fourth man charged in connection with death

HOUSTON (AP) — A fourth man has been charged in the death of a Heights teen-ager who was among 15 people who died consuming cocaine-heroin cocktails.

Charles Martinez was charged with federal drug distribution following his arrest, police said.

Jennifer Rivera was the youngest of 15 victims who died between Aug. 11 and Aug. 12.

An affidavit by FBI special agent Bryan P. Finnegan alleged that 19-year-old Jose "Kilo" E. Colunga delivered the lethal drugs to the 16-year-old and two other men.

Finnegan said one of the men needed medical treatment after overdosing on the drugs, but has identified Colunga, 19. The other man, a landscaper who also was briefly hospitalized after taking the drug, said Colunga brought a *behold* with him when he delivered 2 or 3 grams of white powder, the FBI agent said.

Colunga told officers he received the drugs from Roman Gabriel "Horse" Juarez, 23. Juarez was arrested Aug. 15. The FBI statement recounted Juarez told police he bought the drugs from Lucas Martinez, 23, for about \$100, then sold them to Colunga, Finnegan said.

Colunga, Juarez and Lucas Martinez were arrested earlier last week on federal drug distribution charges. Charles Martinez, 22, was arrested Friday.

Rivera's mother found the teen-ager's body on Aug. 12. A Harris County Medical Examiner's investigator said no deaths connected to the earlier overdose cases were reported over the weekend.

Harris County sheriff's officers have arrested Andy Gonzalez, 25, in connection with the deaths of three county residents.

Gonzalez, remained jailed Tuesday without bail.

NEWS IN BRIEF

75-year-old man dies in fishing accident

VICTORIA (AP) — A veteran fisherman was killed Monday evening while he loaded his boat on a trailer.

Ross Dooley and his brother were returning from a fishing trip when Dooley fell into the water at the Coleto Creek Reservoir and Park boat ramp.

"He could have swam in there to get his boat or he could have fell in," Game Warden Jesse Garcia told *The Victoria Advocate* in Tuesday's editions.

Dooley, 75, of Golliad was pronounced dead by Justice of the Peace Ophelia Moreno.

An autopsy has been ordered, Garcia said.

Dooley's brother had backed up the trailer to help him load the boat. Then the brother began screaming for help.

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