

# Body Is Reautopsied In Curare Inquiry, '66 Finding Upheld

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A reautopsy yesterday of the body of a 4-year-old girl who died at Riverdell Hospital in Oradell, N.J., in 1966 has failed to establish any natural cause of death, according to Dr. Michael M. Baden, deputy chief medical examiner of New York City.

But chemical tests to determine whether the child was killed by curare or any other drug have only started, and may take several weeks to complete.

When the child, Nancy Savino, died on March 21, 1966, as autopsy disclosed no anatomical or pathological cause of death. Chemical tests at that time did not reveal the presence of drugs, but the tests did not include one for curare.

The child's death was one of nine cases that figured in late 1966 in an investigation of unusual deaths at Riverdell Hospital.

That investigation, by Guy W. Calissi, then the Bergen County Prosecutor, which has been reopened by Joseph C. Woodcock Jr., the present prosecutor, centered on whether a surgeon at Riverdell had used curare to kill his colleagues' patients with curare, a respiratory depressant that can paralyze the breathing muscles. The surgeon, who has not been charged with a crime and who has denied any wrongdoing, has recently been referred to as Dr. X.

As part of his investigation, Mr. Woodcock requested exhumations and reautopsies on five patients who died at Riverdell in 1966. Nancy Savino, whose body was exhumed early yesterday, was the first to be reautopsied.

The reautopsy was conducted here by Dr. Baden. Dr. Edwin H. Albano, chief medical examiner of New Jersey, was present.

Dr. Baden said last night that his findings, pending chemical analyses, "confirmed the original autopsy report" in 1966.