

Patient, 15, Strangled at Willowbrook

Detectives are investigating the death of a 15-year-old boy found strangled in his bed in Willowbrook State School early yesterday.

The dead youngster was in the midst of about 90 other mentally retarded boys in a ward.

Police have reportedly ruled out the possibility of accidental death and are said to have settled on the theory that the dead youth, Clement Scarpone, was strangled by another patient.

No arrests have been made and police were close-mouthed about the circumstances of the killing. Detectives say only that the investigation is continuing.

The slain youth was discovered by an attendant about 1:30 a.m. He was housed in what is described as a dormitory-type setup.

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BENNIE WILLIAMS of 820 Henderson Ave., West Brighton, the attendant, notified hospital officials and Dr. Wahid Mizrahi of the staff pronounced Clement dead.

Dr. Gertrude E. Wilbur, assistant medical examiner, was summoned to perform an autopsy. The determination was that the cause of death was "manual

strangulation," it is reported.

The slain youth was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Scarpone of Manhattan. He had been a patient at the institution since 1950 and was described as "severely retarded."

Indications are that the police have information pointing at another patient as Clement's assailant. The dead boy was "slight" but not undersized, a hospital official said.

There is also some indication that other patients might have witnessed the assault.

Dr. Jack Hammond, Willowbrook director, said that Williams found the boy dead in bed while on a routine round of the ward.

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THE DEATH was "sudden and unexpected" and so led to Dr. Wilbur's autopsy yesterday afternoon. There were marks around the boy's throat, but the medical examiner's investigation was needed to determine whether there was foul play.

When the results were known, Detectives Joseph Fischer and Donald Baeszler moved onto the scene to begin long hours of investigation.

Youngsters in the ward where Clement was found range from about 14 years of age to the early 20s, though the older youngsters are for most part not of large physiques.

Though no formal charges have been lodged as yet, Dr. Hammond said this morning that he will launch "an administrative investigation" into the incident.

He said he and his staff were "most concerned" that a sudden death like this could occur.