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## Woman's mysterious death haunts Fresno family

Former Mayfair Elementary teacher thought all she had was a touch of the stomach flu.

BY KIMI YOSHINO  
THE FRESNO BEE

One moment, Linda Adanalian was healthy and happy, enjoying Disney on Ice with her children. Hours later, she was dead, and no one knows why.

Today, nearly six months after the 37-year-old woman's sudden death, her family, the Fresno County Coroner's Office and forensic pathologists from some of the country's most renowned medical clinics are searching for answers.

"This was a complete shock," said her brother, David Dalition. "We have a healthy young woman who drops dead with appropriate medical care being rendered to her. ... And there's no cause of death. It's highly unusual for this to happen."

Her husband, Mark Adanalian, agreed: "The thing that makes this hard is that she was a beautiful person, and she was vibrant, and she was strong."

On Feb. 11, the day she died, nothing much was out of the ordinary for the former Mayfair Elementary School teacher, except that she had a touch of the stomach flu. She did not feel sick enough to cancel a planned outing to "The Little Mermaid" ice show at Selland Arena with her four children, her girlfriend and her girlfriend's children.

But when the show was over, Adanalian complained of chest

pains, said she couldn't breathe and passed out. Paramedics took her to Fresno Community Hospital, where she died a couple hours later.

In the months since she died, the Fresno County Coroner's Office has run multiple tests but provided no definitive answers. Initial test results returned positive for mercury poisoning. Those

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SPECIAL TO THE FRESNO BEE  
Linda Adanalian is shown with her husband, Mark Adanalian

# Death: Coroner exhumed Fresno woman's body

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tests were later determined to be contaminated because of "technical problems."

Coroner's officials exhumed Adanalian's body in June for a second autopsy and to obtain additional samples. It was a rare action in Fresno County — one that only occurs every few years.

In a recent deposition, the county's chief forensic pathologist, Dr. Venu Gopal, stopped short of classifying Adanalian's death as suspicious or the result of foul play but said, "This is a mysterious death. That's all I would say."

Pathologists from the Mayo Clinic also are assisting in the testing as are other pathologists from around the state.

"There's no evidence she died of natural causes," her father, George Dalition, said. "It means we need an investigation."

At the request of the family, Fresno police began a preliminary investigation that yielded nothing suspicious.

"An investigator has interviewed most of the family members," homicide Sgt. Daryl Green said. "We took a look at it after it was brought to our attention. We've got no conclusions, and we're awaiting word from the Coroner's Office."

Mark Adanalian said he, too, wants answers. He believes his wife died of natural causes, perhaps a cardiac disorder. He initially balked at the idea of having her body exhumed — behavior that raised some suspicions among relatives.

"Do I like it? No," Mark Adanalian said. "My wife was buried, and I feel that was her resting place. But if it's going to help find out why Linda died, then I'm going to do it."

So far, early test results are inconclusive, varying widely depending on whom you ask. Mayo Clinic pathologist Dr. William D. Edwards found "death was most likely due to a cardiac disorder."

But according to a Fresno County autopsy report, pathologist Dr. Albert Siu found nothing unusual while inspecting Linda Adanalian's heart.

Another Mayo Clinic pathologist, Dr. Eric Pfeifer, said, "It just doesn't seem like a cardiac kind of death. ... I didn't see anything, not anything in the heart that can explain it."

Based on Linda Adanalian's early symptoms — diarrhea, vertigo, dehydration and low blood pressure — Pfeifer said the death was "completely strange" and even in line with someone who had been poisoned.

"There are natural diseases that will do that, but to make that call, we have to rule out other things," he said.

Mark Adanalian does not believe there was any foul play. He said he was surprised when Fresno Police arrived at his office to interview him. He first thought they were there to sell him tickets to a police ball.

When they asked about his wife, he said he answered all their questions. No lawyer was necessary.

Since the exhumation, he said he has answered more questions from curious acquaintances.

"We need to put all this stuff to rest," he said. "People that know me know that I love my wife. I miss my wife. She's the mother of my children. But the rumors are going around. Everybody wants to know what's going on, so come on, coroner, let's put it out there."

But the family may never find answers. A small percentage of deaths — between 1% and 3% are left undetermined, said Fresno County Coroner David Hadden. Test results could take a couple more months to be completed.

"It is very difficult for the family because they lack a sense of closure," Hadden said. "That's why in these cases, we go to great lengths to make sure we haven't overlooked