

June 16, 2021

IIU concludes investigation into death following arrest in Winnipeg

The Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) has concluded its investigation into a fatality following the arrest of a male in Winnipeg.

On October 1, 2019, the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) notified the Independent Investigation Unit (IIU) of a fatality following an arrest of a male that occurred in the early morning hours of September 23, 2019 in Winnipeg. WPS responded to a complaint about a naked male, yelling loudly and incoherently in an area along the Assiniboine River near Kennedy Street behind the Manitoba Legislative Building. When police arrived, the male was laying on his back and yelling randomly. Witnesses reported seeing the male fall, possibly striking his head before police arrived. At one point the male got up, would not respond to officers requests and appeared as if he was going to enter the river. Multiple officers were on scene and managed to restrain him but he lost consciousness. CPR was provided by officers on scene and the male was taken to St. Boniface hospital by ambulance but died a week later on September 30, 2019. No witnesses reported seeing any indication that the male was punched, kicked or assaulted in any way by the WPS officers during the incident.

As this matter concerned the death of a person that may have resulted from the actions of a police officer(s), IIU assumed responsibility for this mandatory investigation in accordance with section 66(4) of The Police Services Act (PSA). IIU investigators were assigned to this investigation. In January 2020, the original lead investigator resigned from the IIU and this matter was reassigned to a new lead investigator. This resulted in a delay to permit the new lead investigator time to familiarize themselves with this matter.

Further, in accordance with section 70(1) of the PSA, the IIU was required to seek the appointment of a civilian monitor, as this matter involved the death of a person. The IIU requested a civilian monitor be appointed by the Manitoba Police Commission.

The information obtained and reviewed by IIU investigators included:

- incident history report
- WPS radio transmissions
- 911 Audio Recordings
- scene photographs
- GPS data from WPS cruiser cars
- Air1 video recordings
- notes and reports from various witness officers
- use of force report
- WFPS medical records
- SBH medical records
- autopsy report
- toxicology report

Following the review of officers notes, medical records and interviews with witnesses it has been determined that the death, while tragic, was not the result of any action or inaction by WPS. The Chief Medical Examiner's report lists the cause of death as "anoxic brain injury due to complications of cardiac arrest and due to probably excited delirium". In addition, there is no evidence in this matter that would justify the designation of any of police officer as a subject officer. As a result, there is no further requirement or need by IIU to continue with this investigation.

The investigation is now complete and the matter is closed. The civilian director's complete report is available online at www.iumanitoba.ca. The details of this investigation were first announced on October 1, 2019.

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Media inquiries may be directed to:
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Information on the IIU can be found at www.iumanitoba.ca or at www.twitter.com/IIUManitoba