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Man, teen dies from apparent balcony fall in Mexico

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CTV.ca News Staff Date: Tuesday Jan. 29, 2008 8:22 AM ET

A Selkirk, Man. teenager has died after apparently falling off a 10th floor balcony at a resort in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico over the weekend.

But the family of 19-year old Josh Iwasiuk is searching for answers on whether his death was really an accident.

Jerry Iwasiuk and his brother Josh were on vacation together. Jerry said it was supposed to be a trip they would remember forever.

The two had been in the popular resort city just two nights when tragedy struck.

Jerry didn't find out for several hours that his brother was dead.

"I was in shock," he told CTV Winnipeg. "I looked all over and no one would answer me. I could tell something was up just by the looks people were giving me."

They were staying at the Getaway Club, a two-star resort in Puerto Vallarta.

Mexican police say death was an accident

Mexican officials there told Jerry his brother's death was an accident, but his sister Michelle said an autopsy has raised more questions than answers.

"They said he just had trauma to the back of the head," she said. "I can't see how you can fall off a 10-storey building and just have trauma to the head."

Jerry said he and Josh were partying on Saturday afternoon. By three o'clock he had had about 12 drinks and was so intoxicated a security guard told him he had to go to his room.

Jerry fell asleep for 17 hours, and when he woke up, his brother was dead.

Brother says drink may have been spiked

"People don't sleep that long normally. That's the longest sleep I ever had, and I woke up with a major headache and a little different than a regular hangover," he said. "It's possible someone slipped something into my drink."

Jerry says he's not sure if his brother was robbed before he died. He added it would be hard for his brother to fall - that the railings were chest high, making it almost impossible to slip off.

He said Mexican police didn't question him.

Canada's foreign affairs department told CTV News it is in contact with the family and with police in Mexico regarding their investigation.

Josh's body is still in Mexico, but the Iwasiuk family says foreign affairs is making the arrangements to ship it back to Canada.

The family hopes to have a funeral service later this week.

One of several Canadians to die in Mexico

Josh's death is only the latest in what is becoming a long list of Canadians to die suspicious deaths while on vacation in Mexico. In November 2007, 30-year-old Chris Morin of Okotoks, Alta., died in Cancun after falling from a fourth-floor balcony.

A Cancun newspaper reported that Morin fell after a night of drinking and taking drugs, but local authorities and Morin's family held suspicions he may have been pushed off the balcony after a bar dispute.

Albertan Jeff Toews, 34, also died from grievous head injuries while visiting Cancun last May, another apparent victim of a balcony fall. Family members believed he was the victim of a vicious beating.

Adam DePrisco, of Woodbridge, Ont., was killed in January 2007 while on vacation in Acapulco.

From the beginning, Mexican authorities claimed DePrisco was killed in a hit and run accident, but his family maintains he was savagely beaten by employees at a night club,

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and hit by a car as he attempted to escape his attackers.

Domenic and Nancy Ianiero, also from Woodbridge, Ont., were staying at the luxury Barcelo Maya beach resort near Cancun when they were found with their throats slashed on Feb. 20, 2006. Their killer has still not been found.

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Gerry Poling

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