

Amoebae found in 16 pools

By NG KANG-CHUNG

AMOEBAE have been found in more than half of Hong Kong's public swimming pools, a week-long testing by the Department of Health has revealed.

Results of water quality tests at 27 swimming pools showed that 16 of them — nine in the urban and seven in the New Territories — had non-disease-causing amoebae.

Officials, however, dismissed fears that swimmers could be infected, citing overseas research that it was normal to find non-pathogenic amoebae in swimming pools.

The water quality tests, conducted between Monday and Saturday last week, were prompted after amoebae were found in Hin Tin pool, Sha Tin, where a boy who died of brain inflammation had reportedly been swimming.

The Hin Tin pool has been closed since last week and is expected to re-open at the end of the month on completion of checks to the filtration system.

The department's principal medical and health officer, Leung Ting-hung, said cyst-form amoebae were found in 28 per cent of the 152 water samples taken from all public pools.