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## Oxford student Matt Smith who died on ski trip 'may have been killed by bodybuilding drugs and alcohol'

FIONA SIMPSON |

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Sudden death: Matt Smith, pictured with girlfriend Ellie Bagshaw

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An **Oxford** student found dead by his girlfriend at the start of a university ski trip in the Alps could have been killed by a mixture of bodybuilding drugs and alcohol, **French** police suggested.

St John's college student **Matt Smith**, 22, was found unconscious in his chalet room in the upmarket resort

of Val Thorens on the annual Oxbridge Varsity ski trip.

The history student's girlfriend Ellie Bagshaw found him in cardiac arrest in his apartment on Sunday morning.

Mr Smith's father, Howard, said on Monday he feared his son had succumbed to a mixture of prescription drugs, which he was using to treat mental health issues and a sports injury, and alcohol.

Police said that Mr Smith had been drinking after arriving at Europe's highest ski resort, measuring 7,500ft, on Saturday during the first day of an annual Varsity Ski week attended by 3,000 Oxford and Cambridge students.

Found dead in chalet: Matt Smith, pictured with girlfriend Ellie Bagshaw ()

State prosecutor for Alberville, Jean-Pascal Violet, said that a post-mortem examination had revealed "no evidence of an intervention by a third party" and no signs of violence, [the Times reported](#).

He added: "We suspect a heart failure linked to a combination of consuming alcohol and medicines but we have no certainty about that. Witnesses told us that he took medicines.

"We are carrying out tests to find out whether these medicines could be linked to his sporting activities."

He said that investigators were looking into a theory that Mr Smith might have taken drugs to develop his muscles. But no witnesses confirmed Mr Smith took performance enhancers, according to the newspaper.

Toxicology results could take at least two weeks.

Mr Smith was in his third year at the prestigious university and had recently completed a three-month internship as a junior press officer at Sotheby's auction house in London.

His father, a City financial consultant, said he was still trying to come to terms with his son's sudden death.

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He told the Standard: "The most important thing for us is that Matt was with his friends. His friends meant so much to him. He was with everybody skiing, close to the snow, doing what he loved."

The 49-year-old dismissed claims his son had struggled with cocaine and heroin addiction.

He told the Times: "I can deny reports that Matt was suffering from drug problems, but he had been taking antidepressants for successful treatment of mental health issues, and painkillers for sports injuries."

Mr Smith was a qualified snowboard instructor and also attended the ski trip last year.

Mr Smith's friends described him as a "smashing lad" who was full of "fun and adventure".

Eóin Barrett-Fulton wrote on Facebook: "Still don't believe it, he was taken far too soon. We all thought he was invincible. I'll always love you Matt and I hope you're resting better now. You'll forever be one of my oldest and greatest friends." ■

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