

Contaminated gin: Death toll rises to 42

From Victor Edozie, Port Harcourt

The number of deaths from consumption of contaminated local gin in Rivers State has risen to 42, according to Rivers State Director of Disease Control, Dr Nana Onyekwere.

In a television programme

monitored in Port Harcourt, Onyekwere said apart from 38 deaths recorded in Bonny, Gokana and ObioAkor, four more deaths were recorded in Etche Local Government Area of the state.

He said the survey carried out by the ministry's investigative team indicated that the victims died from consumption of locally brewed gin made from methanol.

Earlier, Permanent Secretary of the state's Ministry of Health, Dr. Somieari Isaac Harry, confirmed the death of 38 people.

"What really caused the death of those who consumed the illicit gin was methanol alcohol. The victims presented symptoms like abdominal pains, vomiting, sudden blindness, speechlessness, fast breathing and confusion. Despite

the fact that we rushed them to the hospital, we still recorded a lot of casualties," he said.

He said 11 cases were recorded in Woji, adding that 10 out of the 11 died. He said 18 cases were recorded in Bonny, out of which 17 died. He advised members of the public to desist from further consumption of the substance pending further investigation.