

11 family members die after meal in Benue

**From Hope Abah Emmanuel,
Makurdi**

Eleven family members have died after eating a meal at Ikobi community in Apa LGA of Benue State.

The 11 deceased are Adi Ale, Ochefije Ojo, Maria Ojo, Aipu Ochefije, Aboyi Ngbede Ochefije, Mary Ochoyoda, Ehi Abu, Blessing Abu, Peace Ochoyoda, Ojochono Daniel and Favour Edoh.

Our correspondent gathered that while six of the victims died in one day, the remaining five died within the space of a few days.

Professor Mohammed Adah, the traditional ruler of the Ikobi community, told our correspondent by telephone that the incident happened in September, and not just a few days ago as is being speculated on social media.

Adah said suspicion about some sort of poisoning heightened when five of the family members died at a go such that experts were invited from the state's Ministry of health to investigate multiple deaths.

He explained that the result of the investigation was yet to be made available.

State epidemiologist, Dr Sam Ngishe, did not respond to calls put to his telephone for comment about the investigation on the matter.

The police spokesperson in the state, SP Catherine Anene, said, "Six were confirmed dead on the same day. I'm on transit, I have called for details to send to you."

Meanwhile, a former Commissioner for Youths and Sports Development, Comrade Ojotu Ojema, whose visit to the bereaved family on Sunday broke the news of the tragedy to the public, condoled with the family.