

# Six die of Cholera after eating Abacha

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Six adults have been confirmed dead in Lagos after eating a local delicacy, popularly known as *Abacha*.

The African Salad is a mixture of cassava, palm oil, garden egg and pepper, among others.

The victims, according to Commissioner for Health Dr. Jide Idris contracted the *Ogawa* strain of *Vibrio Cholera* after taking the meal.

Idris said they were among 45 cases identified by his ministry's Epidemiology Unit. The incident, he said, occurred at some communities in Isolo Local Community Development Area (LCDA). The *Abacha* vendors have been arrested.

The Commissioner said a team of epidemiologists was led to the source of water used in preparing the *Abacha*, following reports that the victims suffered from acute diarrhoea after the meal.

According to him, samples of the *Abacha* and water from two wells were collected and sent to the Lagos State Drug Quality Control Laboratory for analysis.

The report showed the presence of *Vibrio Cholera*, *Salmonella* species and *E.coli* in the *Abacha* and one of the well water samples, *The Nation* gathered.

Idris said ano-rectal swabs were collected from 15 of the affected people and taken to the Central Public Health Laboratory, Yaba, where seven of the samples yielded *Vibro Cholera* after continuous culture.

He cautioned the public against eating *Abacha* that they did not prepare, adding that the risk of contracting cholera is increased by poor water and environmental sanitation, including open defecation.

Idris said: "We have instituted measures towards quick containment and control of the outbreak. Our health workers, especially the medical officers, health educators, disease surveillance/notification officers and environmental health officers are in the community striving assiduously towards quick containment and control of spread of the disease. Chlorination of water supply has been intensified, awareness campaign is on-going and cases are being promptly diagnosed and appropriately managed in our hospitals."

Explaining how those affected were treated, the commissioner said 26 cases were managed at Isolo General and Lagos Mainland hospitals.

He said: "Twenty two have been discharged, one died, while three are still on admission at Lagos Mainland Hospital. All the three cases that are still on admission are in stable condition. 17 of the cases were managed at private health facilities- Healing Cross Hospital, Isolo (four), Bola Hospital Isolo (five), West Care Hospital, Ejigbo (five) and New Line Hospital, Isolo (three). Three of the 17 cases died. The other 14 have been discharged."

Three vendors of contaminated *Abacha*, he said, had been identified at Cele Bus Stop. The government, Idris added, has restricted the sale of the delicacy and distributed factsheets on cholera to Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH), the 26 general hospitals in the state and medical officers in the 57 Councils for circulation to health workers.

He said there is Intensive Disease Surveillance and Notification Officers in all the Local Government Areas (LGAs), especially Oshodi-Isolo and Amuwo Odofin, appealing to the public to report any case of diarrhoea and vomiting to the nearest health facility or call 08037170614, 08052817243 and 08173577579.