

# 11 family members die of food poisoning in Benue

**E**LEVEN family members have reportedly died of food poisoning in Ikobi community in Apa Local Government Area of Benue State.

Villagers said that the family members died after consuming food contaminated with harmful chemicals.

The 11 victims were: 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 learnt that while six of the victims died in one day, the remaining five died a few days after.

One of the bereaved family members, Ochoyoda Abu, lost his wife, two sisters and a daughter.

Professor Mohammed Adah, the traditional ruler of Ikobi community, told our correspondent on the telephone that a similar incident happened in September.

He said suspicion about food poisoning heightened when five of the victims died the same day in the community, adding that experts were invited from the state's Ministry of Health to investigate the cause of deaths.

Adah said the results of the

investigations were yet to be made available to the community.

It was learnt that there were those who also took ill after eating the food and were taken to hospital. They were said to have since recovered and returned home.

State Epidemiologist, Dr. Sam Ngishe, did not respond to calls put to his telephone for comments about the investigation.

Police spokesperson Catherine Anene said the victims died on November 14, adding that seven of the victims were confirmed dead in one day alone.

Anene said, "About three months ago, somebody died in that particular house so on the 14th of this month, a woman went to the house, cleaned the house and removed the foodstuffs from there which she prepared and 12 people ate and suffered stomach ache.

"Seven people died that same day and five were taken to the hospital and they survived. Investigation is ongoing."

Chief of Ikobi, Chief Musa Audi, through the Secretary, Abogonye Ochola John, said the incident was a mystery.