

Grandma, son, two others die after eating amala in Kwara

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| By Tunde Oyekola

| Map of Kwara State

The Kwara State Government has placed the Healthcare on Outbreak Response Mode after confirmation of the death of a 70-year-old grandmother, her son and two other family members in the Eruda community, Ilorin in Ilorin West Local Government Area of the state after eating an Amala meal said to have been poisoned.

The state Commissioner of Health, Dr Amina El-Imam, said the victims' death was from the consumption of Amala believed to contain poison.

El-Imam, at a press conference addressed in Ilorin, the state capital, on Tuesday, also disclosed that one death was recorded from gastroenteritis.

According to her, the entire health team of the ministry visited the community after the report of a family who lost a number of their relatives, after consumption of Lafun-Amala made from cassava flour.

“On getting there, the claim was that there was an instance of food poisoning where the 70-year-old woman fell ill and died after consuming Amala.

“Unfortunately, her son and grandchildren also consumed the same food, fell ill and died. They were taken to the University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital where they passed away,” she said.

El-Imam stated that the Amala made from Lafun could have been responsible for the death, explaining that the people who consumed the yam flour without Lafun were fine.

As she put it, “Those who consumed the mixture of both Lafun and Amala mixture fell ill and eventually, some of them died.”

The commissioner disclosed that several others were making a good recovery in the hospitals where they were receiving treatment.

“Some are doing well and hopefully, following intensive medical treatment, should be able to recover fully. It was observed that the residence was in a location where personal and environmental hygiene was not optimal,” she said.

El-Imam stated that this is a case of chemical food poisoning, potentially due to under-processed cassava used in the production of the Lafun.

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“We have another four cases recovering at the moment, in addition, of course, to the four that we unfortunately lost,” she lamented.

Similarly, the commissioner disclosed that an Initial Rapid Diagnostic Test was conducted on the suspected case of cholera, which turned out to be gastroenteritis.

She explained that one death was recorded at Osin Gada, in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara as a result of gastroenteritis.

“The community had a few cases of stooling and vomiting, predominantly among children, of which, unfortunately, one life was lost.

“The vomiting and stooling drew the attention of the state’s disease reporting structure.

“On getting there, treatment was immediately commenced and all the affected patients have received immediate standard treatments to stop the symptoms and treat them and restore them to health,” she said.

El-Imam disclosed that the deceased is the index case who demonstrated this illness before it spread to others.

According to her, the disease was characterised by vomiting, diarrhea, and general abdominal pain among the patients.

She pointed out that personal and environmental hygiene of the area was not optimal, adding that all efforts had been made to ensure the disease was contained to the currently treated patients.

“We are looking into providing them with more and better sources of potable water,” she said.

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