



TRANSLATE:::

‘Local gin’ suspected of causing 20 deaths in Ondo

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By Dayo Johnson

Akure — THE Ondo State government said it suspected ethanol poisoning from a local gin for the death of over 20 persons at Irele area of the state last week.

It dismissed insinuation that the alleged strange disease was contagious and put death toll at 18.

Conflicting reports emanated from the remote community last week over the outbreak of a strange disease which killed the victims.

While the natives in the community alleged that some unknown persons committed sacrilege by breaking into the Malokun Shrine and stole sacred objects, government insisted such was unknown to science.

The state Commissioner for Health, Dr Dayo Adeyanju, speaking in Akure, said: “Findings from post-mortem carried out on the victims and other laboratory tests revealed that the disease was neither epidemic nor contagious.

“Preliminary report shows that ethanol poison was found in the systems of all the victims. Our investigations have also revealed that the victims, who, interestingly, were all *Okada* riders, gathered at some local joints to consume alcoholic substance mixed with roots and some other local herbs on the eve of the outbreak of the disease.

“I can assure you that the disease is in no way contagious. The fact that none of the caregivers has contracted the disease has greatly underscored this point.

“Therefore, the fear of spread does not arise and should be discouraged. We strongly suspect ethanol poison, and in view of this, we have ordered for another toxicology test for surviving victims.”

The commissioner, who said there had been no report of new cases in the last three days, said 23 people were affected in all, of which 18 had lost their lives.

Dr Adeyanju pointed out that the cases of five other survivors who had gone blind, had been referred to the University Teaching Hospital, UCH, Ibadan for further examination and monitoring.

The commissioner declined joining issues with traditionalists who believed that the outbreak of the disease was a result of the atrocity of some youths who broke into the shrine and stole artifacts which angered the gods of the community

Dr Adeyanju pointed out that his job “goes beyond explaining the god’s action as he was expected to back up his claims with available evidence.”

The commissioner, however, said the dead persons would be buried in body bags to curtail the spread of the disease.

Meanwhile, The Chief Priest of Malokun Shrine, High Chief Lemo in an interview, said the breaking into the shrine by unknown person was a sacrilege hence the casualties recorded in the community.

Lemo noted that such ugly incident was the first in the history of the community. According to him, the gods have been appeased otherwise the death toll would have been alarming.

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