

# Nigeria confirms three cases of monkeypox

October 16 2017

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Nigeria said Monday it had confirmed three cases of monkeypox after receiving dozens of reports of the disease since last month in seven states across the country's south.

Health Minister Isaac Adewole said 17 suspected [cases](#) of the [viral disease](#) have been identified in Bayelsa state since the first was reported on September 22.

"We have received laboratory confirmation for the [monkeypox virus](#) from three of these cases from the WHO Regional Laboratory in Dakar, Senegal," he said in a statement.

According to the World Health Organization, monkeypox is a rare [disease](#) that occurs mainly in remote areas of central and west Africa near tropical rainforests.

Symptoms are similar to those found in human smallpox patients but much less severe, and the disease has a low fatality rate.

The symptoms include aches, body pain and fever as well as a bumpy localised rash on the skin.

According to Adewole, patients with the disease were "doing well clinically".

Of the 14 other cases identified, 12 have come back as negative while results for the last two are not yet available.

"The most likely source of infection is a primary zoonotic transmission, from an animal, with secondary person-to-person transmission," Adewole said.

The health ministry said at least 43 other suspected cases had been reported in six southern states, including Lagos, as well as in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja.

Four of the suspected cases in Lagos state—whose mega-city capital of about 20 million people is sub-Saharan Africa's largest—were negative and many of the others would likely be as well, said Adewole.

The minister sought to reassure the public that "all the necessary public health measures have been put in place and will continue to be implemented".

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has set up an emergency operations centre to coordinate its response and test samples.

Public [health](#) messages have been broadcast calling on people to frequently wash their hands and avoid eating bushmeat.

In September, at least 10 people in the Central African Republic died in a monkeypox outbreak. There have also been fatalities in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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