

Educational Outreach on the Safe Use of Traditional Medicines among the Community of Bukit Pinang Subdistrict, Samarinda

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Abstract

The utilization of traditional medicine as an alternative form of healthcare is experiencing a notable increase within contemporary culture. These medications are frequently employed in accordance with intergenerational knowledge transmission and constitute an essential component of cultural legacy. This article examines the significance of traditional medicine as a valuable resource for inspiring the advancement of novel pharmaceuticals and alternative medical practices in contemporary times. This article pertains to community service initiatives conducted by Bukit Pinang Village, Samarinda City, East Borneo. The primary objective of these activities is to enhance community awareness on the categorization of traditional medicines and their associated safety considerations. These findings of this study revealed that a significant proportion of the participants were female, encompassing a diverse range of age groups. Most participants exhibited a robust comprehension of the classification of traditional medicine, perceiving it as a comparatively organic and less hazardous substitute for conventional medicine. Following counselling sessions and the provisions of educational videos, a significant number of participants came to recognize the significance of obtaining the registration permit number issued by the Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan (BPOM). Despite perceiving the inspection procedure as complex, several participants maintained confidences in the safety of traditional medicine that adhered to the regulations set forth by the BPOM. This study emphasizes the significance of comprehending and being cognizant of the safety aspects associated with traditional medicines to enhance prudent intake.

Keywords: BPOM, traditional medicine, number of registration

INTRODUCTION

The use of traditional medicine has become an integral part of our cultural heritage and continues to evolve within modern society (Prasanti, 2017). Plants, roots, and other natural ingredients remain the primary choices for many individuals seeking alternative health solutions (Sepriani et al., 2021; Septa et al., 2023). In various communities, traditional medicine has been passed down through generations as a means of treating various illnesses and maintaining health. Its use is often rooted in ancestral knowledge and practices (Gita & Danuji, 2021).

The significance of traditional medicine lies in its role as an alternative or complementary approach to increasingly advanced modern medicine (Suhariyanti et al., 2021). Amid rapid technological advancements in medical science, traditional medicine offers a unique perspective that encompasses a deep understanding of local ecology, natural resources, and the interconnectedness between humans and their

environment. It also reflects local wisdom shaped by centuries of observation and experiential knowledge (Widiarti et al., 2016).

In recent years, public interest in traditional medicine has grown, both as an alternative treatment and as a source of inspiration for the development of new pharmaceutical products. The depth of knowledge surrounding medicinal plants, processing technologies, and usage methods has drawn the attention of scientists, researchers, and healthcare practitioners. Recent scientific studies have provided a stronger foundation for understanding the efficacy and safety of traditional medicines (Puspitasari et al., 2021).

One of the key aspects that must be emphasized in the context of traditional medicine is its safety. Although these remedies have been used for centuries, ensuring their safety remains crucial and requires continuous evaluation. Factors such as appropriate dosage, potential interactions

with modern medications, and long-term effects must be thoroughly understood (Risniati et al., 2019).

Therefore, in efforts to benefit from traditional medicine, the public must prioritize a critical aspect—its safe usage (Aditama, 2014). Not all traditional medicines can be assumed to be safe without adequate consideration. It is essential for individuals to be well-informed and capable of evaluating the traditional remedies they intend to use (Jawa La & Kurnianta, 2019).

METHOD

This community service activity was conducted offline on August 28, 2023, using lecture-based methods combined with the presentation of educational videos. The materials delivered included an introduction to categories of traditional medicines, guidelines for their proper use, registration number identification, and instructions on how to verify the registration status of traditional medicines through the BPOM (Indonesian Food and Drug Authority) application and website. The target audience of this activity was the residents of Bukit Pinang Subdistrict, Samarinda City, East Kalimantan, with a total of 31 participants. To assess the participants' level of understanding, a questionnaire was administered following the presentation and video screening.

DISCUSSION

This community engagement activity involved 31 participants from the Bukit Pinang Subdistrict, with an age range spanning from 18 to over 46 years. The majority of participants were female (90.3%), while male participants accounted for only 9.7%. The two most represented age groups were 18–25 years and 36–45 years, each comprising 32.3% of the total participants. Notably, approximately 48.4% of participants demonstrated a strong understanding of traditional medicine classifications, underscoring the relevance of this knowledge due to the community's frequent use of traditional remedies. Many participants perceived traditional medicines as more natural and posing fewer side effects compared to conventional drugs (Parawansah et al., 2020). A significant number of participants even preferred traditional medicine over modern pharmaceuticals, reinforcing the need for proper understanding to promote informed and responsible use (Budiman et al., 2017).

The materials and educational video presented during the activity emphasized the importance of empowering the community to independently assess and ensure the safe use of traditional medicines. The session highlighted the criteria for identifying safe traditional medicines

and the importance of adhering to recommended usage guidelines. This emphasis is crucial, as despite the health benefits traditional medicines may offer, the potential risks associated with their use should not be overlooked (Sari, 2006).

In line with technological advancements, the Indonesian Food and Drug Authority (BPOM) has provided accessible tools to facilitate the verification of traditional medicine safety. Through the BPOM mobile application and official website, individuals can easily check the registration numbers of traditional medicines. This initiative enables the public to make more informed and responsible decisions regarding traditional medicine consumption (Aulani, 2019).

Following the presentation and educational video, results showed that 93.5% of participants became aware that all traditional medicines circulating in the market must possess a valid registration number issued by BPOM. Furthermore, 48.4% of participants reported actively checking the BPOM registration number on traditional medicine packaging, indicating an increased awareness regarding the safety of traditional medicine use. As with conventional pharmaceuticals, properly registered traditional medicines display clear usage instructions on their packaging (Siahaan et al., 2017). Questionnaire data revealed that 93.5% of participants understood the importance of following these instructions. Most participants reported regularly reading and adhering to the recommended usage guidelines when consuming traditional medicines.



Gambar 1. Pemberian materi dan kuesioner kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat

In relation to the use of the BPOM application or website to verify the registration number of traditional medicines, approximately 64.5% of respondents reported that they had never performed such a check. One of the potential challenges identified was the length and complexity of the registration number, which consists of a combination of letters and numbers. Although some respondents (47.1%) stated that the process was neither particularly difficult nor particularly easy, it still posed a usability concern for a portion of the participants. Nevertheless, survey results indicated that 64.5% of respondents believed that traditional medicines bearing an official BPOM registration number could be safely consumed. This reflects a positive perception and trust in the safety of traditional medicines that are legally registered and in compliance with BPOM regulations.

CONCLUSION

Community service activities focusing on educating the public about the safe use of traditional medicines can significantly improve public understanding of traditional medicine classifications and other important aspects to consider during consumption. Knowledge regarding the correct usage instructions and verification of traditional medicine registration numbers circulating in the community provides new insights, enabling the public to be more cautious and informed in utilizing traditional medicines.

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