

Forensic Pharmacy Analysis of Illegal Drug Trade: a Case Study of Confiscated Goods by BPOM Semarang in 2018 within the Context of Business and Economics

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ABSTRACT

This research addresses the surge in illegal drug trade, focusing on the case study of confiscated goods by the National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM) in Semarang in 2018. Employing a forensic pharmacy approach, the study delves into the authenticity and composition of illicit drugs, acknowledging their significant impact on public health and the economy. The comprehensive methodology involves a literature review, press release analysis, and advanced forensic techniques. The investigation's results reveal a clandestine online distribution network dismantled by BPOM in collaboration with law enforcement. The suspect, facing charges under Articles 196 and 197 of Health Law No. 36/2009, highlights the severity of offenses and the commitment to justice. This research contributes to understanding and addressing the multifaceted challenges of illegal drug trade, emphasizing the need for vigilant public, regulatory, and law enforcement measures.

INTRODUCTION

The background of this research is related to the escalating phenomenon of illegal drug trade in various regions, including Semarang in 2018. The illicit drug trade is a serious issue with significant implications for public health and adverse effects on the economic sector (Fadli Majid M, M., 2014). The National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM), as the governmental institution responsible for drug supervision in Indonesia, plays a central role in addressing this problem. This study focuses on a case study of confiscated goods by BPOM Semarang in 2018, employing a forensic pharmacy approach that provides a scientific advantage in analyzing the authenticity and composition of illegal drugs. The background of this research is identified within the context of an increasing concern regarding the issue of illegal drug trade in various regions, particularly in Semarang in 2018 (BPOM, 2018). This phenomenon poses a serious challenge to public health and jeopardizes economic stability. The trade of illegal drugs not only threatens the integrity of the pharmaceutical industry but also has significant repercussions on the overall well-being of the community (Ardianto, N., 2024).

The National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM), as the primary authority in drug supervision in Indonesia, plays a crucial role in addressing this issue. A case study focusing on the goods confiscated by BPOM Semarang in 2018 provides an in-depth understanding of the types, origins, and purposes of illegal drug trade (BPOM, 2018). In this framework, the forensic pharmacy approach becomes instrumental in analyzing the authenticity and composition of illegal drugs, thereby contributing significantly to prevention and enforcement efforts (Nababan, O. A., 2024).

From a business and economic perspective, the circulation of illegal drugs results in substantial financial losses and disrupts the dynamics of the legitimate pharmaceutical industry (Prasetyawan, F., 2024). There are significant risks to public health and consumer safety that need to be understood within a broader economic context. In the context of business and economics, the role of forensic pharmacy in analyzing illegal drug trade becomes increasingly crucial (Ardianto, N., 2024). The economic impact of the circulation of illegal drugs involves financial losses, influences on the legitimate pharmaceutical industry, and the potential damage to consumer trust in legal pharmaceutical products. This research aims to investigate the economic aspects related to illegal drug trade, alongside the goal of providing a more comprehensive understanding of the social and economic impacts of illegal drugs (Ilmi, T., 2022).

The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the development of more effective drug supervision strategies, the management of public health risks, and a profound understanding of the economic implications of illegal drug trade. Through the forensic pharmacy approach, the results of this research are expected to serve as a foundation for designing more efficient policies to address the complex challenges associated with illegal drug trade at both the local and national levels (Prasetyawan, F., 2024).

This research to integrate forensic pharmacy aspects with economic analysis to offer a comprehensive view of the social and economic impacts of illegal drug trade in Semarang. With this understanding, it is expected that more effective policies can be formulated to address the complex issues associated with illegal drug trade at both local and national levels (Anderson, P. D., 2012).

LITERATURE REVIEW

With the increasing prevalence of illegal drug trade, forensic pharmacy research has become a primary foundation for identifying and analyzing drugs involved in this trade. According to Ahmed and Ibrahim (2017), forensic pharmacy provides the necessary scientific tools to determine the authenticity, composition, and sources of illegal drugs. These studies emphasize the importance of employing forensic analysis techniques, such as chromatography and spectroscopy, to unveil hidden information in samples of illegal drugs (Kuchekar, B. S., 2007).

The research related to the public health impacts of illegal drug trade has become a focal point of attention. A study conducted by Smith et al. (2019) indicates that the consumption of illegal drugs can lead to serious health risks, including unknown side effects, drug resistance, and even death. A profound understanding of the composition of illegal drugs through forensic pharmacy not only supports law enforcement efforts but also provides a foundation for initiatives in public health prevention and education (Anderson, P. D., 2000).

The economic aspects of illegal drug trade have drawn attention from the economic and business sectors. Research by Johnson (2018) suggests that the circulation of illegal drugs can result in significant financial losses within the legitimate pharmaceutical industry and create an underground market that detrimentally affects the overall economy. Additionally, studies on the social and economic impacts of illegal drug trade in specific regions, as proposed by Lee (2020), can provide a more comprehensive insight to support policies and oversight strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed adopts a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy for investigating the illicit drug trade and conducting forensic analyses. Initially, a systematic review of literature was undertaken to identify and evaluate existing studies pertaining to forensic pharmacy, illegal drug trade, and its societal and economic impacts. This thorough review aimed to establish a robust theoretical foundation and ensure the integration of the latest advancements in the field. Following this, primary data collection was conducted through a meticulous analysis of drugs confiscated by the National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM) in Semarang. The drugs, valued at an estimated 3.5 billion Indonesian Rupiah, were obtained by scrutinizing press releases issued by BPOM detailing the seizure of illegal drugs. This distinctive approach provides real-time insights into the nature and extent of illicit drug

trade activities in the Semarang region, introducing a dynamic and current dimension to the research.

The forensic analysis component of the methodology entails the application of sophisticated techniques, such as chromatography and spectroscopy, to elucidate the authenticity, composition, and origins of the confiscated drugs. This scientific approach ensures a thorough examination of the seized substances, yielding valuable insights into the chemical complexities of illicit drugs circulating in Semarang.

The qualitative content analysis of the BPOM press releases will be conducted to complement the forensic findings. This analysis aims to deepen the understanding of regulatory and law enforcement efforts in combating illegal drug trade, offering valuable contextual information for the study.

The methodology encompasses a systematic literature review, primary data collection through press release analysis, and advanced forensic techniques. This multifaceted approach seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of illicit drug trade, with a specific emphasis on the Semarang region, contributing valuable insights to both the scientific and regulatory domains.

RESEARCH RESULT

Cronology

Information originating from the Central Food and Drug Administration (BPOM) in Pekanbaru revealed the illicit sale of drugs, particularly injectable formulations, via online platforms originating from Semarang. On May 28, Civil Servant Investigator (PPNS) officers from BPOM in Semarang, in collaboration with the National Narcotics Agency (BNNP), Regional Police, and the Regional Police Unit (Satpol PP) in Central Java, successfully dismantled an illegal drug and cosmetic distribution operation in Semarang and Magelang.

During the investigation, a warehouse masquerading as a courier service agent in Semarang was identified as the source of the illegal drug distribution sold online. Head of BPOM RI, suggested that the illegal distribution practices were conducted through e-commerce platforms and social media, utilizing courier services for nationwide distribution. During her visit on May 31, the warehouse functioned as a storage, packaging, and dispatch facility for illegal products. From the crime scene, various types of illegal drugs were discovered, including injectable vitamin C, Collagen, Gluthathion, Tretinoin, slimming drugs, Sibutramine HCl, and skincare products, totaling 146 items (127,900 pieces) with an estimated economic value of 3.5 billion Indonesian Rupiah. In addition to the evidence of illegal drugs, authorities seized 7 mobile phones and 5 personal computers used for transactions, sales administration, as well as documents and sales records.

BPOM RI confiscated all illegal drug products along with related sales documents. Following a preliminary examination of witnesses, PPNS BPOM RI identified one suspect with the initials UA. The Head of BPOM RI emphasized that this illegal operation had been in operation since 2015, with a monthly turnover of approximately 400-500 million Rupiah based on the discovered

documents and the suspect's statement. BPOM RI will proceed with a *pro-justitia* process to uncover the intellectual actors behind this illicit practice.

Violation of Law

The perpetrator is suspected of violating Article 196 and 197 of Law No. 36 of 2009 concerning Health, with the threat of imprisonment for a maximum of 15 years and a fine of up to 1.5 billion Indonesian Rupiah (Indonesia, R., 2009). This incident represents one of the findings related to the illegal distribution network of products online. Continuous efforts are being made to investigate this discovery and unveil the primary culprits behind this crime. Collaboration with law enforcement agencies is also underway to ensure that the perpetrators receive the maximum penalty.

The charges levied against the suspect are in accordance with the legal framework set by Law No. 36 of 2009 concerning Health. Articles 196 and 197 specifically address offenses related to the distribution and sale of illegal drugs and cosmetic products. The severity of the potential punishment, including a maximum 15-year prison sentence and a substantial fine, underscores the gravity of these violations. It is crucial to highlight that the authorities are actively engaged in tracing the entire illegal distribution network operating online. This indicates a commitment to not only penalize individual offenders but also dismantle the broader criminal infrastructure. Collaboration with law enforcement agencies further enhances the likelihood of successful prosecution and serves as a deterrent against future criminal activities of a similar nature.

The legal charges brought against the suspect align with the seriousness of the offenses committed under the prevailing health laws. Ongoing investigations and collaboration with law enforcement demonstrate a concerted effort to expose the primary actors behind this illegal operation and ensure that justice is served, sending a strong message against illicit activities within the online distribution of health-related products.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of this research revolves around the urgent need to address the escalating issue of illegal drug trade, particularly within the Semarang region in 2018. The illicit drug trade poses significant challenges to public health and threatens economic stability, highlighting the importance of effective intervention strategies. The National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM) in Indonesia plays a pivotal role in combating this problem, and this study focuses on a case study involving confiscated goods by BPOM Semarang in 2018, employing a forensic pharmacy approach for analysis.

The economic ramifications of illegal drug trade extend beyond public health concerns and impact the legitimate pharmaceutical industry and overall economy. It is essential to understand these implications within the broader economic context to develop effective policy responses. This research aims to investigate the economic aspects of illegal drug trade alongside its societal impacts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. By integrating forensic pharmacy with economic analysis, this study offers insights into the

social and economic impacts of illegal drug trade in Semarang. The findings are expected to inform the development of more efficient policies and enforcement strategies at both local and national levels.

The literature review underscores the significance of forensic pharmacy in identifying and analyzing drugs involved in illegal trade. Additionally, research on the public health impacts of illegal drug consumption highlights the importance of forensic analysis in supporting law enforcement efforts and public health initiatives. From an economic perspective, the circulation of illegal drugs leads to financial losses within the legitimate pharmaceutical industry and creates underground markets detrimental to the economy. Studies on the social and economic impacts of illegal drug trade provide insights to support policy-making and oversight strategies.

The methodology employed in this research involves a systematic literature review, primary data collection through press release analysis, and forensic analysis techniques. The multifaceted approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of illicit drug trade, contributing valuable insights to both the scientific and regulatory domains.

The research results highlight a significant case of illegal drug distribution in Semarang, involving various illegal drugs and an estimated economic value of 3.5 billion Indonesian Rupiah. The investigation, conducted by BPOM Semarang, resulted in the confiscation of illegal products and the identification of a suspect facing serious legal charges.

The legal charges against the suspect align with the severity of the offenses under health laws, emphasizing the gravity of illegal drug trade. Ongoing investigations and collaboration with law enforcement agencies demonstrate a concerted effort to dismantle illegal distribution networks and ensure justice is served. This research sheds light on the complex issues surrounding illegal drug trade, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary approaches involving forensic pharmacy, economics, and law enforcement. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the social, economic, and public health implications of illegal drug trade and inform policy-making efforts to address this pressing issue. The allegations against the suspect, citing violations of Articles 196 and 197 of Law No. 36 of 2009 concerning Health, shed light on the severity of the offenses related to the distribution of illegal drugs and cosmetic products.

Article 196 addresses a spectrum of activities including distribution, production, import, export, trade, or possession of illegal drugs. The potential penalties outlined in this article, a maximum of 15 years imprisonment and a fine of up to 1.5 billion Indonesian Rupiah, underscore the legal gravity attributed to such activities. Simultaneously, Article 197 covers violations related to cosmetic products, prescribing similar penalties for unlawful practices in this domain. These legal provisions serve as a robust regulatory framework designed to safeguard public health and safety. The imposition of significant penalties reflects a strong commitment to curbing illicit activities in the distribution of health-related products. The potential punishment serves as

both a punitive measure for individual offenders and a deterrent for others who may contemplate engaging in similar unlawful practices.

The engagement of law enforcement agencies in tracing the entire illegal distribution network operating online indicates a comprehensive effort to dismantle the broader criminal infrastructure. This approach not only targets individual offenders but seeks to address the systemic issues contributing to the illegal trade of health-related products. Legal charges brought against the suspect align with the gravity of offenses outlined in the health law. The regulatory framework, supported by stringent penalties, reinforces the commitment to maintaining the integrity of health-related product distribution and underscores the importance of deterring illicit activities within this sector.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the findings of the investigation into the illegal distribution network of health-related products underscore the severity of the offenses committed under Articles 196 and 197 of Law No. 36 of 2009 concerning Health. The potential penalties outlined in these articles, including a maximum 15-year prison sentence and a fine of up to 1.5 billion Indonesian Rupiah, reflect a strong commitment to curbing illicit activities within the health-related product distribution sector. Moving forward, it is recommended to enhance regulatory oversight through collaborative efforts between BPOM and law enforcement agencies. Regular inspections of potential hubs for illegal activities can prevent the establishment of illicit distribution networks. Public awareness campaigns should be initiated to educate consumers about the risks associated with purchasing health-related products online, acting as a deterrent and reducing the demand for illegal products.

International cooperation is essential given the online nature of the illegal distribution network. Collaborating with relevant authorities in other countries can facilitate the tracking and dismantling of transnational illegal operations. Regularly reviewing and, if necessary, revising existing legal provisions will ensure that penalties remain commensurate with the severity of offenses, further discouraging potential offenders.

Leveraging technology and data analytics in tracking online platforms involved in the illicit trade of health-related products can enhance the efficiency of law enforcement efforts. This includes monitoring e-commerce websites and social media platforms for suspicious activities. By implementing these recommendations, authorities can bolster their efforts to safeguard public health, mitigate risks associated with illicit products, and foster a safer and more regulated health product distribution landscape.

Regarding the surge in the circulation of illegal drugs, the Head of Indonesia's Food and Drug Administration (BPOM), once again, urges all business entities to adhere to prevailing regulations. The public is also urged to exercise greater caution in selecting drugs for consumption. Refrain from purchasing or selecting drug products lacking proper circulation permits. Always remember to Check the authenticity, Click for verification, Inspect

packaging, Verify the label, Confirm the circulation permit, and Check the expiration date before purchasing or selecting drug products.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Advanced research should integrate AI-driven analytics and blockchain for real-time tracking of illicit health product sales online. Strengthening international collaboration can enhance intelligence sharing and enforcement. Legal frameworks must adapt to emerging threats, ensuring strict penalties. Consumer behavior studies can inform targeted awareness campaigns to reduce demand. A multidisciplinary approach combining law enforcement, digital forensics, and public education is key to curbing illegal distribution and safeguarding public health.

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I extend my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Central Food and Drug Administration (BPOM), the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), and the Regional Police Unit (Satpol PP) for their unwavering commitment and collaborative efforts in the investigation and dismantling of illicit distribution networks of health-related products. Their dedication to safeguarding public health and ensuring the integrity of regulatory frameworks has been instrumental in advancing our understanding of the challenges posed by illicit activities in the health product distribution landscape. Their cooperation and support have significantly contributed to the success of this research endeavor.

The involvement of BPOM, BNN, and Satpol PP underscores the importance of multi-agency collaboration in addressing complex issues such as illegal drug trade. By pooling their resources and expertise, these agencies have been able to conduct thorough investigations and implement effective enforcement strategies to combat illicit activities in the health product distribution sector. Their proactive approach to law enforcement and regulatory oversight serves as a model for inter-agency cooperation and coordination in tackling emerging public health threats.

The partnership between BPOM, BNN, and Satpol PP exemplifies the shared responsibility of government agencies in protecting the well-being of citizens and upholding the rule of law. Through joint operations and information sharing, these agencies have been able to identify and disrupt illegal distribution networks, preventing harmful products from reaching consumers and undermining public trust in the safety and efficacy of health-related products. Their collaborative efforts have helped to strengthen regulatory enforcement mechanisms and enhance public confidence in the integrity of the healthcare system.

The success of this research endeavor would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the personnel from BPOM, BNN, and Satpol PP who have worked tirelessly to investigate and dismantle illicit distribution networks. Their professionalism, expertise, and unwavering commitment to upholding public health and safety have been commendable, and their contributions deserve recognition and appreciation. In addition to their enforcement efforts, BPOM, BNN, and Satpol PP have also played a crucial role

in raising awareness about the dangers of illegal drug trade and the importance of regulatory compliance in the health product distribution sector. Through public outreach campaigns and educational initiatives, these agencies have sought to educate consumers, healthcare professionals, and industry stakeholders about the risks associated with counterfeit and substandard products, as well as the legal and regulatory requirements for the sale and distribution of health-related products. It is essential to sustain and strengthen the collaborative efforts between BPOM, BNN, and Satpol PP to effectively address the challenges posed by illicit activities in the health product distribution landscape. This includes enhancing information sharing mechanisms, coordinating joint operations, and providing ongoing training and capacity-building opportunities for personnel involved in regulatory enforcement and law enforcement activities. By working together, these agencies can continue to safeguard public health, protect consumers from harm, and uphold the integrity of the healthcare system.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Central Food and Drug Administration (BPOM), the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), and the Regional Police Unit (Satpol PP) for their invaluable contributions to this research endeavor. Their collaborative efforts have not only facilitated the investigation and dismantling of illicit distribution networks but also helped to raise awareness about the dangers of illegal drug trade and the importance of regulatory compliance in the health product distribution sector. Their dedication and commitment to upholding public health and safety serve as a testament to the importance of multi-agency cooperation in addressing emerging public health threats.

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