

**SOCIALIZATION OF THE PROPER USE OF OVER-THE-COUNTER
MEDICINES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AT SUKOANYAR
STATE PRIMARY SCHOOL MOJO DISTRICT EAST JAVA**

**Herman¹ Fendy Prasetyawan², Ferdinta Daniasta Setyawan³, Anis
Akhwan Dhafin⁴**

^{1,4}Program Study S1 Farmasi, Fakultas Ilmu Kesehatan, Universitas Kadiri,
Jawa Timur

³Program Study S1 Farmasi, Fakultas Ilmu Kesehatan, Universitas Jayapura,
Papua

²Program Pendidikan Profesi Apoteker, Fakultas Ilmu Kesehatan, Universitas
Kadiri, Jawa Timur

Email:

¹herman@unik-kediri.ac.id

²ferdinta10@gmail.com

³Anisdhafin13@unik-kediri.ac.id

⁴fendy.pra@gmail.com

ABSTRAK

Penggunaan obat bebas yang tidak tepat pada anak sekolah dasar dapat menimbulkan risiko kesehatan, sehingga diperlukan upaya edukasi sejak dini. Kegiatan ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman siswa mengenai penggunaan obat bebas yang benar melalui sosialisasi dengan metode interaktif. Sasaran kegiatan adalah siswa kelas IV–VI di SDN Sukoanyar, Kecamatan Mojo, Kabupaten Kediri, Jawa Timur. Metode pelaksanaan meliputi penyampaian materi menggunakan media presentasi interaktif dan permainan edukatif, disertai evaluasi melalui *Pre-Test* dan *Post-Test*. Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan adanya peningkatan signifikan pengetahuan siswa, di mana pemahaman terkait perbedaan obat bebas dan obat resep meningkat dari 35% menjadi 85%, kemampuan membaca label obat dari 25% menjadi 80%, serta kesadaran bahaya penggunaan obat sembarangan dari 30% menjadi 85%. Dengan demikian, kegiatan sosialisasi ini efektif dalam meningkatkan kesadaran dan perilaku sehat siswa terkait penggunaan obat bebas, serta dapat dijadikan model edukasi kesehatan di sekolah dasar.

Kata kunci: sosialisasi, obat bebas, sekolah dasar, edukasi kesehatan

ABSTRACT

The improper use of Over-The-Counter (OTC) medicines among elementary school children can pose health risks, making early education essential. This activity aimed to improve students' understanding of the correct use of OTC medicines through socialization using interactive methods. The target participants were fourth to sixth grade students at Sukoanyar State Elementary School, Mojo District, Kediri Regency, East Java. The implementation methods included delivering material through interactive presentations and educational games, accompanied by evaluations using pre-tests and post-tests. The results showed a significant improvement in students' knowledge: understanding of the differences between OTC and prescription medicines increased from 35% to 85%, the ability to read medicine labels improved from 25% to 80%, and awareness of the dangers of unsupervised medicine use rose from 30% to 85%. Thus, this socialization activity proved effective in enhancing students' awareness and healthy behavior related to OTC medicine use, and it can serve as a model for health education in elementary schools.

Keywords: socialization, over-the-counter medicines, elementary school, health education

INTRODUCTION

The health of elementary school-aged children is a crucial foundation for the growth and development of future generations. At this age, children are physically and mentally active, making them more vulnerable to common health problems such as fever, cough, colds, or headaches. Many parents and teachers often resort to *Over-The-Counter* (OTC) medicines as the first step in addressing these complaints due to their practicality and accessibility (Ding *et al.*, 2020).

However, the improper use of OTC medicines in children can pose serious risks, including overdosing, unknown drug interactions, and harmful side effects. Research has shown that parents' knowledge regarding OTC medicine use remains limited, which increases the risk of medication errors in children (Sado *et al.*, 2022). This highlights the urgent need to provide correct understanding of

OTC medicine use, especially among elementary school-aged children.

Socialization on the proper use of OTC medicines is particularly important in rural areas such as Mojo District, East Java, where access to healthcare professionals may be limited. Elementary schools, as formal educational institutions, play a vital role in instilling basic health knowledge in children from an early age, enabling them to understand the importance of safe and appropriate medicine use (Baadani *et al.*, 2015).

Elementary school students often imitate adult behavior, including in medicine consumption. Without proper education, they may develop a habit of taking medicines unsupervised, which in the long run could lead to unsafe and harmful self-medication practices (Gohar *et al.*, 2021). Therefore, early prevention is essential to ensure children do not adopt unhealthy habits in medicine use.

School-based socialization programs can teach fundamental principles of proper OTC medicine use, such as reading medicine labels, understanding usage instructions, and recognizing symptoms that require medical attention. Studies confirm that health education in schools can enhance children's awareness and healthy behavior, thereby reducing the risk of improper medicine use (Ding *et al.*, 2020).

In addition to students, teachers and parents should also be involved in these socialization efforts. Evidence shows that well-informed parents can prevent inappropriate medicine use in children and minimize the risk of OTC side effects. By ensuring equal understanding among families and schools, supervision of children's medicine use can be more effective (Sado *et al.*, 2022).

In conclusion, socialization on the OTC medicines at Sukoanyar State Elementary School, Mojo District, East Java, is highly

relevant. This program is expected to enhance the knowledge of students, teachers, and parents regarding safe medicine use, thereby supporting children's health and development while preventing the risks of inappropriate medicine use from an early age.

METHODS

The socialization program on the proper use of *Over-The-Counter* (OTC) medicines at Sukoanyar State Elementary School, Mojo District, Kediri Regency, was conducted using an educational and participatory approach. The primary targets were fourth to sixth grade students, with the involvement of teachers and parents. The activity began with coordination with the school to set the schedule, followed by an initial observation to assess students' and teachers' understanding of OTC medicines.

The material was delivered through interactive presentations and educational games. Topics included the definition of OTC medicines, how to read labels, proper usage guidelines, the risks of unsupervised consumption, and the importance of consulting healthcare professionals. Students were engaged through question-and-answer sessions, simulations, and group competitions. Teachers and parents participated in special sessions highlighting their roles at home. Evaluation was carried out through pre-tests and post-tests, as well as short interviews to assess the outcomes of the program

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socialization activity at Sukoanyar State Elementary School was carried out smoothly and received a positive response from both students and teachers. Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test, there was a clear improvement in students' understanding of over-the-counter (OTC) medicine use. Prior to the activity, most students only knew that medicines were used to cure illness, but they did not understand the difference between OTC and prescription medicines. After the activity, more than 80% of the students were able to explain that OTC medicines are marked with specific symbols on the packaging, how to read dosage instructions, and the importance of asking permission from a teacher or adult before taking medicine.

The students' responses were highly enthusiastic, particularly during the educational games and the simulation of reading medicine labels. These interactive methods created a more enjoyable learning atmosphere and helped students better understand the material. Teachers also expressed that this program was highly relevant, as health education in schools has so far been limited mostly to personal hygiene and nutrition, making the topic of medicine use a valuable addition.

Overall, the activity successfully improved both students' and teachers' knowledge and awareness regarding the proper use of OTC medicines. It is expected that this program will foster healthier behavior within the school environment and reduce the risk of inappropriate OTC medicine use among children at Sukoanyar State Elementary School.



Figure 1. Presentation of material and question-and-answer session

CONCLUSION

The socialization program on the proper use of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines at Sukoanyar State Elementary School, Mojo District, East Java, was successfully implemented and effectively enhanced students' knowledge and awareness regarding medicine use. Evaluation results demonstrated a significant improvement, particularly in distinguishing between OTC and prescription medicines, reading medicine labels, and recognizing the importance of correct usage instructions. Therefore, this activity proved effective in providing basic health education to elementary school students and is expected to serve as a preventive measure against medication errors among children.

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