

UGM Professor Urges People to Wisely Use Alternative Medicine for Covid-19

Thursday, 30 April 2020 WIB, By: Natasa Adelayanti




Professor of the Faculty of Pharmacy UGM, Prof. Dra. Zullies Ikawati., Ph.D., Apt., urged people to be more careful in using alternative medicines or herbs to prevent Covid-19.

"During the Covid-19 pandemic, many alternative medicines emerged that claimed to be able to overcome this virus. However, people need to be more thoughtful and wise in choosing alternative products on the market," she emphasized on Thursday (30/4)

The Head of the UGM Clinical Pharmacy Masters Study Program said the emergence of a number of these products originated from concerns. There had no precise recommendations for Covid-19 medicines. Even so, most alternative products that do not have scientific evidence can overcome Covid-19. In fact, it is difficult to accept it based on scientific logic.

Although there is evidence of healing, she mentioned that it came from the proof of a handful of people. That way, it still lacks to support the efficiency of these drugs. Furthermore, Covid-19 disease in some people with strong immunity does not even provide symptoms, and it can be healed automatically by the immune.



While on the other hand, the delay in getting the proper medicine can prolong recovery. In fact, it can be fatal if the virus continues to replicate rapidly in the patient's body.

"Therefore, people need to be more careful and wise in choosing alternative products on the market. New drug innovations for Covid-19 are certainly highly appreciated and expected, but they must remain in a scientific passage that can be traced and proven," she explained.

Zullies revealed that Indonesia is very prosperous in medicinal plants, which have the potential to defeat Covid-19. However, the rules in the development of new medicines from herbs must still follow the applicable scientific laws.

The source of herbal medicine is slightly different from synthetic medicine, which is derived from years of empirical experience. Indonesian traditional herbs from various regions generally have years of experience for a particular disease. In addition to empirical experience, there are also sources of herbal medicines in the form of innovations. For example, mangosteen peel or orange peel that was not used by the public, but based on research turned out to have medicinal benefits.


There are herbal medicines that are processed by the community for self-consumption, such as herbal medicine. Some are processed with more modern ideas, formulated with other ingredients and presented in a modern way such as capsules, caplets or other preparations, to be marketed more broadly. Some are packaged into Standardized Herbal Medicines and pre-clinically tested on test animals to ensure their safety and efficacy. If it passes the test, these herbal medicines can be used in humans.

"If it has been clinically tested in humans, and proven its efficacy and safety, herbal medicines can be registered as Fitofarmaka," he explained.

Tips for choosing medication

So how to tips on choosing herbal or alternative medicine for Covid-19? Zullies delivered some tips on selecting drugs to prevent or treat Covid-19. One of them is using herbal medicines that have been registered at BPOM. To ensure that products that have been registered with BPOM and get a distribution permit number can go through the BPOM application that is available, <https://cekbpom.pom.go.id/>, or Halo BPOM.

"If the product listed as food, then the product cannot have a marketing authorization as a health supplement or even medicine at the same time. So, if there is a food product that is claimed to have



a treatment effect, then it needs to be questioned," Zullies said.

Next, do not immediately believe in products with inflated claims and unclear mechanisms. Ask your pharmacist first, for example, a pharmacist at a pharmacy, hospital, or pharmacy education institution.

Likewise, when you encounter promotions for medicines or herbal products with unclear ingredients, you should be careful because there may be ingredients in the product that must be avoided in certain diseases a person has. To ensure safety, consult pharmacists, and ask for recommendations for products that are more secure.

"Make sure that the medicinal products you consume are clear and safe. Hopefully, we all avoid the use of alternative medicines that are not appropriate during the pandemic and also avoid Covid-19 disease," Zullies concluded.

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