

The Vital Roles of University Laboratories in Dealing with Pandemic Covid-19

Wednesday, 20 May 2020 WIB, By: Natasa Adelayanti



The UGM Professor Council held a talk on the topic "University Laboratories and Readiness in confronting Pandemic in the Future" on Friday (5/15). This event is conducted online through Webex.

There are several speakers presented by DGB UGM to fill in these talks. They are Dr. I Nyoman Kandun, MPH. (Former Director-General of Infectious Diseases of the Republic of Indonesia), drg. Ika Dewi Ana, M. Kes., Ph.D. (Deputy Chancellor for Research and Community Service), Prof. Dr. dr. Hari Kusnanto (Professor of FKKMK UGM), and Prof. Sofia Mubarika, M.Med., Sc.Ph.D. (Professor of FKKMK UGM). While Prof. Dr. Mustofa, Apt., M.Kes. (UGM Research Director) attended as well as a moderator.

Kandun began the discussion by emphasizing that in world history, a pandemic had occurred several times. Seeing that an epidemic can be present at any time in the future, WHO in 2005 compiled the International Health Regulation (IHR), which was approved by 194 countries through the 58th World Health Assembly.



Kandun said that the IHR aims to prevent, protect, and control cross-border diseases that disrupt traffic and international trade. The diseases referred to in the IHR are infectious and non-communicable diseases that cause Public Health International Emergency Concern (PHEIC) or world-class health emergencies.

"The existence of PHEIC encourages countries in the world to work together to deal with such threats in a coordinated action," he explained.

This collaboration is called the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). GHSA consists of several actions, from prevention, detection, to emergency response. Primarily in screening, which includes laboratory systems and workforce development. Kandun also explained that there also held the Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP).

"This FETP has been implemented in Indonesia. The government invited several institutions, including universities. Five universities are participating in this training program, namely UI, UGM, Hasanudin University, Airlangga University, and Udayana University. The collaboration is in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic," he explained.

Meanwhile, Ika Dewi Ana said that UGM always tried to support the acceleration of handling the Covid-19 pandemic. Starting from public education, providing PPE support and health equipment, developing screening laboratories, and conducting research related to Covid-19 (both vaccines, drugs, and health equipment).

"The Microbiology Laboratory and the World Mosquito Project Laboratory at FKKMK UGM have been established as a reference point for examinations in the DIY and Central Java areas. Every day this laboratory can carry out 300 tests with a speed of 2x24 hours. Now the UGM Integrated Research and Testing Laboratory has also built a new laboratory with BSL-3 and Biobank standards to speed up the testing process. This process is undertaken after assisting BIN to UGM last time," she explained.

Ika also explained that UGM is currently conducting a rapid test in three regions, namely Jogja, Solo, and Semarang. This activity is a product of the BPPT Technology Research and Innovation Task Force. In addition to UGM, two other universities that are members of the GHA acronym (Gadjah Mada, Hepatika / University of Mataram, and Airlangga) participated in this activity.

The RI-GHA19 rapid test results will be compared with pool testing. This comparison will be further examined. Therefore, the government can use the results of the study as policy development for the epidemic, both Covid-19 and others in the future.



Prof. Hari Kusnanto appreciated the steps from UGM. He considered the action was appropriate because of UGM resources, especially the laboratory earlier. "We are on the right path. This way is exactly similar to what happened in the United States. Thanks to the Covid-19 test initiative by the Yale University Infectious Disease Laboratory led by Marie-Louise Landry, MD, It accelerates detection there," he said.

Meanwhile, Prof. Mubarika was optimistic that research was stretching during the pandemic. He said Covid-19 had spurred a revival of national research. That's because research during this time was done synergistically, involving all components of the nation.

"This synergy is perfect for the development of our research. Mutual support between institutions exists in harmony. I hope this kind of spirit can continue to be cultivated. With this synergy, I hope the vaccine will be found soon so that this pandemic can quickly pass," he concluded.

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