

Letter To Editor

High Steroid Usage Among Reproductive-aged Farmers in Underserved Area in Indonesia, Langkat, South Securai Village

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Sir,

Analgesic had become one of the top highly demand over-the-counter drugs in many countries, also in Indonesia (1). Dale et al. reported prevalence of using over-the-counter analgesics at least once per week was 47% (2). Steroid had become the most consumed drug that can be obtained easily. Ely et al. showed that 28.8% of 758 elderly persons used one to four analgesics, which mostly were steroids (3).

Steroids are used in almost all medical specialties. In US, Overman reported 1.2% of the populations consume long term glucocorticoids (4). In UK, Staa et al. (2000) reported percentages of 0.85-0.9%, mostly in aged 70–79 years people (5). Gudborjnsoon showed that most patients use more than one GC with mean average of 47 months intake (6).

In our observational study priorly, we found that almost all reproductive aged farmers in South Securai village consumed analgesics. They suffered from joint

and muscle pain due to their jobs as farmers. Indeed, steroids was largely used, in addition, they could obtain these drugs easily.

Dexamethasone was the mostly used steroid among farmers. Mean length of steroid use was found to be above 5 years. Two thirds had reported routine thrice daily consumption of steroid due to joint pain, fatigue, and desire to increase stamina. From our study, we found that far access to primary care, no health insurance, availability of steroid over the counter, were the factors that affected steroid usage in most subjects.

Clinicians must be aware of this condition as steroid had many devastating side effects. Knowledge of steroid use was also still low. Despite mostly knew that steroid can cause weight gain and moon face, they did not know about the increase risk of diabetes mellitus, delayed growth, lower mass density, hypertension about what they were consumed.

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