



Tramadol Abuse Among Adolescents: Analysis Based on Differential Association Theory in Tasikalaya Regency

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Abstract

Adolescents in Tasikalaya District show a tendency to be susceptible to Tramadol protection, a type of opioid analgesic commonly used to reduce moderate to severe pain. This phenomenon is a resource for the medical community, health practitioners, local governments and other related parties. Serious attention is needed to this problem to prevent negative impacts on the health and welfare of adolescents in the region. Coordinative efforts between the health, education and government sectors need to be strengthened to develop effective prevention and intervention strategies. A deep understanding of the factors driving Tramadol is key in designing appropriate preventive measures. This research examines the use of the drug tramadol among teenagers in Tasikalaya Regency using a qualitative approach and Differential Association Theory. The results of the study showed that adolescents' support for tramadol was caused by social and environmental factors, including interactions with peers and family members who also used the drug. Teenagers often rationalize their behavior and have certain attitudes that influence their decision to take tramadol. Apart from that, the easy availability of tramadol medication and affordable prices also influences teenagers' choices. This study provides a deeper understanding of the problem of tramadol among adolescents and suggests comprehensive preventive measures.

Keywords: Tramadol Abuse, Adolescents, Tasikalaya Regency, Differential Association Theory

1. Introduction

Teenagers are a segment of society that is vulnerable to various forms of drug abuse, including illegal drugs. One substance of increasing concern is Tramadol, an opioid analgesic used medically to control moderate to severe pain. Tasikalaya Regency, like other areas, is also not immune to Tramadol abuse among teenagers. This is a major concern for the medical community, health practitioners, local governments and other affected parties (Maesaroh & Rahmawati 2018).

Tramadol abuse in adolescents is a multidimensional problem that requires a comprehensive approach to understand the factors that influence and encourage this behavior. In this context, cause and effect analysis becomes necessary to identify the factors that play a major role in cases of tramadol abuse among teenagers in Tasikalaya Regency. With a deeper understanding of the trigger factors, more effective prevention and intervention efforts can be designed and implemented.

Tramadol is a drug that can be classified as a narcotic and not a psychotropic, because tramadol is a class of opioids which are often prescribed by doctors as pain relievers or analgesics and do not change the user's behavior. Tramadol belongs to a group of drugs called opioid agonists. This drug works by changing the brain's response to pain so that an analgesic effect occurs (Ripple et al., 2000; Kitamura et al., 2014). The human body produces opioids called endorphins. So tramadol can be said to be similar to substances in the brain called endorphins, which are compounds that bind to receptors (parts of cells that receive certain substances).

The receptors then reduce the pain messages the human body sends to the brain. Tramadol works in a similar way to reduce the amount of pain the brain thinks is occurring. However, once again, remember that this drug is not suitable for everyone and its use must be under the supervision of a doctor. Some side effects may occur after taking

this drug. In general, tramadol can cause drowsiness (Marcou et al., 2005). Therefore, if prescribed by your doctor, you should not drive, operate heavy machinery, or participate in hazardous activities.

Using Tramadol in excess of the recommended dosage can cause various potentially dangerous side effects. One of the most common side effects is respiratory failure. When used in uncontrolled doses, these substances can depress the respiratory system, causing shallow breathing or even stopping breathing completely (Lintz, 1981; Cebrecos et al., 2021). Apart from that, Tramadol can also cause nausea, vomiting and other digestive disorders. Some users may experience dizziness, fainting, or confusion due to the neurological effects of this drug. Non-medical use of Tramadol can cause tolerance, that is, the body becomes less sensitive to the effects of the drug. This may encourage users to increase their dosage excessively, increasing the risk of overdose.

In addition, repeated and uncontrolled consumption can cause physical and psychological dependence. When a person becomes dependent on tramadol, stopping use can cause severe withdrawal symptoms, including agitation, confusion, and even seizures. Non-medical use of Tramadol can also increase the risk of dangerous drug interactions. Most of these side effects are caused by interactions with medications or other substances a person is currently using. One of the biggest risks of non-medical use of Tramadol is overdose (Asrina, 2019; Fardin & Asrina, 2019). Use of drugs that is not controlled and supervised by medical personnel can result in an overdose which can be fatal. Symptoms of a Tramadol overdose include difficulty breathing, confusion, and decreased consciousness to coma. Uncontrolled use can also cause damage to internal organs which can be fatal if not treated immediately.

From the perspective of a Tramadol addict, the experience of using this drug often begins with pain-relieving effects and an enticing sense of euphoria. Another effect experienced by an addict is that he always feels calm, when carrying out activities an addict will not get tired easily, especially when working. Apart from that, when addicts relax or do no activities they will feel weak and tired as if they are sleepy and want to sleep. This is what makes it very difficult for addicts to give up the habit of consuming tramadol.

News about hundreds of villagers in Karawang who were addicted to tramadol became a sensation in itself. Previously, the Pasundan University Student Executive Board released the results of its research which found that tramadol was widely sold in stalls around campus. This news complements previous news regarding the disclosure of tramadol sales. In early 2023 alone, police authorities thwarted the distribution of 37 million pills of tramadol and trihexyphenidyl confiscated from international networks in India, Singapore and Indonesia. Circulation and abuse of tramadol can be found almost throughout Indonesia, not only on the island of Java, but also in other areas, such as Kalimantan and Sulawesi. The disclosure of international syndicates by police officers also indicates that abuse of legal substances or prescription drugs has been noticed by transnational crime syndicates, which of course requires comprehensive understanding and handling (Xu et al., 2021; Cavoy et al., 1997).

Factors influencing Tramadol abuse in adolescents can include social, psychological, economic and environmental aspects. Family dynamics, school environment, peer pressure, and exposure to information about illicit substances may play important roles in the development of violent behavior. In addition, psychological factors such as stress, depression or the tendency to seek new experiences can also play an important role. Through in-depth analysis of these factors, we hope to better understand the dynamics of tramadol abuse among teenagers in Tasikalaya Regency. The information obtained from this analysis will provide a strong basis for developing more targeted and focused prevention programs, and help design more effective intervention strategies (Roussin et al., 2022).

In this context, this research aims to present a comprehensive analysis of the causes of Tramadol abuse among teenagers in Tasikalaya Regency. By focusing on social, psychological and environmental factors, this research seeks to make an important contribution to the understanding of this complex issue, with the hope of providing better guidance to stakeholders in addressing the problem of tramadol abuse among adolescents.

2. Materials and Methods

The research method applied in this study is a qualitative approach. This approach emphasizes a deep understanding of the observed phenomena, rather than seeking generalizations. The data collected consists of two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through interviews with sources, while secondary data consisted of recordings, photos and other additional material that complemented the information from the interviews.

Qualitative methods were chosen because researchers wanted to understand holistically how teenagers who use Tramadol interact with their environment, and wanted to get an in-depth description of this abuse problem. Descriptive methods are also used to provide an overview or explanation of data obtained through interviews, both written and verbally from sources.

Before conducting interviews, the researcher made observations first in the Tasikmalaya area to understand the context and situation in the field. The research was carried out during June-July 2023. The total number of informants who participated in this research was six people, consisting of one police staff and five teenagers who used Tramadol. Through this method, it is hoped that this research can provide deeper insight into the factors that influence Tramadol abuse among teenagers in Tasikalaya Regency.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Research Result

Factors Causing Tramadol Abuse This research identified several factors causing Tramadol abuse by adolescents. The following is primary data from two sources interviewed by the researcher:

- a). First Interviewee (Daweng) Daweng, pseudonym, is 19 years old, works as a freelance worker, and has a final education in grade 2 of junior high school. He is the third of eight children, with parents who worked as traders. Daweng is a quiet teenager and tends to be shy. His current activity is assisting in the construction of houses in the surrounding area. While doing this work, daweng uses Tramadol to overcome fatigue, increase activity, and gain self-confidence.
- b). Second Interviewee (Pikacu) Pikacu, a pseudonym, is 18 years old, currently helping his parents in the trading business. His last education was in grade 1 of junior high school. He is the eldest of two children, with parents who work as traders. Pikacu is also relatively shy, especially when dealing with customers to help his parents trade. Therefore, he uses Tramadol to increase his self-confidence in these situations. Picacu started taking Tramadol at the age of 15. When using Tramadol, he can consume 5 to 6 pills a day, sometimes taken with mineral water, or mixed with coffee.
- c). Third Resource Person (Abox) Abox, pseudonym, 16 years old, is a student at junior high school in the Tasikmalaya area. In his surrounding environment, Abox is known as a good teenager. Even though he studied in Tasikmalaya, Abox comes from Central Jakarta. Abox's motivation for taking Tramadol was to forget about the problems he was facing. When taking Tramadol, Abox felt that thoughts of his problems disappeared. Apart from that, Abox chose Tramadol because the price was more affordable compared to other medicines.
- d). Fourth Resource Person (Teler) Teler, a pseudonym, is 19 years old, has completed junior high school. His mother was a food seller, while his father was a three-wheeled bajaj driver. Teler took Tramadol when he helped his parents trade, because this drug made him less tired and more enthusiastic. Initially, Teler took Tramadol because he felt that the problems he was facing were forgotten when taking this drug, and he also felt an increase in self-confidence. In his environment, Teler is known as an active, social teenager who has many activities.
- e). Fifth Resource Person (Robet) Robet, a pseudonym, is 18 years old, has a final education in grade 1 of junior high school. Robet spends more time with his friends. The reason Robet took Tramadol was because he wanted to find out what it felt like, and also because in his environment, the abuse of Tramadol was not taboo. In addition, the price of Tramadol is more affordable compared to other medicines.

The results of the study show that abuse of the drug tramadol among teenagers is increasing. Teenagers tend to commit this abuse because of their high curiosity and impulsive decisions without considering the consequences. Data also shows that the majority of perpetrators who abuse the drug tramadol are aged between 16 and 19 years. Ease of access and affordable prices are the main reasons why teenagers choose tramadol over other similar medical drugs.

Information from Robet's sources also confirmed that at the age of 18, he was still taking tramadol. The process of obtaining tramadol medication does not require a certificate from a doctor, this is an additional factor that makes it easier for teenagers to obtain it. Apart from that, according to information from Tasikmalaya police staff, economic factors are the main cause of drug abuse among teenagers in the area (Roussin et al., 2015; Cicero & Ellis 2012).

Difficult economic circumstances encourage teenagers to look for solutions or escape, and this is what makes them turn to drug abuse. Population density also plays a role in drug abuse among teenagers. With limited land and space to relax at home, many teenagers prefer to spend time outside the home, which in turn can create opportunities to engage in drug abuse behavior.

These findings provide a clearer picture of the factors that influence tramadol drug abuse among teenagers in Tasikalaya Regency. Serious efforts are needed from various parties, including the government, society and related institutions, to overcome this problem and provide healthier alternatives for teenagers in dealing with the problems and stresses of their lives.

3.2. Analysis using Differential Association Theory

The results of this research were analyzed using the Differential Association Theory proposed by Sutherland. This theory explains that criminal or deviant behavior is the result of learning in a social environment, and there are nine prepositions used to analyze research results:

- a). Criminal Behavior is Learned Behavior This theory emphasizes that criminal or deviant behavior is not something that is inherited, but is learned. The results showed that adolescents who used Tramadol learned this behavior from interactions with other people in their environment. They learn about the drug from friends or family members who also use it.
- b). Criminal Behavior is Learned in Interaction with Other People through Communication This preposition says that learning criminal behavior occurs through interaction and communication with other individuals. In cases of

Tramadol abuse, teens learn about the drug through conversations and questions with their friends who have used it.

- c). A Significant Part of Criminal Behavior Occurs in Intimate Personal Relationships in Groups. This theory suggests that criminal behavior tends to occur in intimate personal relationships in groups. The results showed that adolescents who used Tramadol did so in the context of close relationships, such as with peers or family members who lived in the same neighborhood.
- d). When Criminal Behavior is Learned, Rationalization or Justification Reasons and Certain Attitudes This theory suggests that when individuals learn criminal behavior, they also learn rationalizations or justification reasons for that behavior. The results showed that teenagers who used Tramadol often rationalized their actions with excuses such as "everyone does it" or "there's nothing wrong with it." They also have certain attitudes that allow them to continue abusing this drug.

By using Differential Association Theory, this research helps understand how teenagers in Tasikalaya Regency learn about and involve themselves in Tramadol abuse. Social and environmental factors play an important role in shaping these behaviors, and this understanding can be used to design more effective intervention strategies.

4. Conclusion

This research has explored the problem of tramadol drug abuse among teenagers in Tasikalaya Regency and analyzed the factors that influence it using the Differential Association Theory proposed by Sutherland. Based on the data and research results, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

- a). Tramadol Abuse among Adolescents is an Increasing Problem : This research shows that tramadol drug abuse among adolescents in Tasikalaya Regency is increasing. Teens tend to take these drugs for a variety of reasons, including a desire to overcome problems, increase self-confidence, and curiosity.
- b). Social and Environmental Factors Play an Important Role : Social and environmental factors have a significant influence in the abuse of the drug tramadol. Adolescents often learn this behavior through interactions with peers or family members who also use the drug. Interests in the personal and intimate environment are also the main context in which tramadol drug abuse occurs.
- c). Rationalizations and Certain Attitudes Influence Drug Abuse : Adolescents who use the drug tramadol often have certain attitudes that allow them to rationalize their actions. They may feel that what they are doing is not a violation of the law or that there is nothing wrong with it. This reflects the influence of the learning process of criminal or deviant behavior.
- d). Availability and Price of Tramadol Influence Choice : The easy availability of tramadol medication and its affordable price compared to other similar drugs are also factors that influence teenagers' choice of taking this drug.

In order to overcome the problem of tramadol drug abuse among teenagers, it is necessary to carry out comprehensive prevention efforts, involving various parties such as the government, educational institutions, families and society. Education about the dangers of drug abuse and increased awareness of the risks need to be increased, while there also needs to be a deep social approach to understanding the root causes of this behavior.

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