



Transnational Crime of Illegal Drug Circulation in Pekanbaru City

M Zulherawan¹⁾, Mohamad Fauzi Latib²⁾, Rendi Tri Afrianda³⁾, Rizki Pratama⁴⁾

Program Studi Kriminologi, Universitas Islam Riau.Riau Indonesia¹⁾
Fakulti Sains Sosial Gunaan, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin. Terengganu Malaysia²⁾
Program Studi Ilmu Pemerintahan, Universitas Islam Riau.Riau Indonesia³⁾
Program Studi Kriminologi, Universitas Islam Riau.Riau Indonesia⁴⁾

zulherawan@soc.uir.ac.id¹⁾
fauzilatif@unisza.edu.my²⁾
rendi3@soc.uir.ac.id³⁾
rizkipratama@student.uir.ac.id⁴⁾

Abstract

The circulation of illegal drugs represents one of the forms of transnational crime that seriously impacts public health and consumer protection. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of illegal drug circulation in Pekanbaru City, identify the perpetrators' modus operandi, and evaluate the effectiveness of the Big Post for Drug and Food Supervision (BBPOM) in enforcement actions. The research method employs a qualitative approach with a case study, through analysis of secondary data and documentation from BBPOM, as well as interviews with relevant parties. The results indicate significant fluctuations in the number of cases during 2019–2023, with the highest surge in 2021 at 6,667 cases, dominated by supplies from Asia and Southeast Asia. The perpetrators' modus operandi includes product disguise, digital distribution, and hidden storage to evade supervision. The role of BBPOM, in collaboration with Kominfo, is crucial in enhancing supervision effectiveness, although it still faces challenges in resources and cross-sectoral coordination. This study concludes that eradicating illegal drugs requires a comprehensive strategy that combines repressive efforts, structural prevention, public education, and cross-border cooperation.

Key words: Illegal drugs, transnational crime, BBPOM, Pekanbaru, consumer protection

INTRODUCTION

Health is a holistic condition encompassing physical, mental, and social well-being, enabling individuals to lead productive lives both economically and socially. Health serves as a primary capital for various productive activities and is influenced by an individual's physical and mental state. In human life, health plays a crucial role because a healthy mind supports a healthy body, making it the primary benchmark for maintaining quality of life (Murray, C. J., & Lopez, A. D., 2013).

The development of medicines in Indonesia's health sector has not yet fully encompassed comprehensive management. Consequently, health services still face challenges in ensuring the quality of enforcement and guidance for traditional stamina drug businesses. According to Law No. 36 of 2009 on Health, drugs are defined as substances or combinations of substances, including biological products, used to influence or investigate physiological systems or pathological conditions for diagnosis, prevention, treatment, recovery, health improvement, and contraception (Republic of Indonesia Law No. 36 of 2009).



With Indonesia's population around 281,603,800 people, health becomes extremely urgent in addressing illegal drugs to prevent society from consuming circulated drugs in the Indonesian region. According to BPOM, the trend of adding Chemical Drug Substances (BKO) to traditional medicines is still dominated by sildenafil citrate and tadalafil, claimed to boost stamina.

The Big Post for Drug and Food Supervision (BBPOM) is a technical implementing unit of the National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM), holding the status of a non-ministerial government institution. BBPOM is directly responsible to the President through the Head of BPOM, with the main function of managing government affairs in drug and food supervision. Its duties and authority are based on the provisions of Law No. 36 of 2009 on Health and related regulations governing BPOM's institutions (Republic of Indonesia Law No. 36 of 2009).

Based on BPOM Regulation No. 21 of 2020, particularly Article 3, BPOM's primary task is to manage government affairs in drug and food supervision in accordance with applicable laws. In this context, BPOM plays a vital role in ensuring the safety, quality, and efficacy of drugs, which is an integral part of efforts to maintain and improve public health (Republic of Indonesia BPOM Regulation No. 21 of 2020).

Buying and selling activities constitute a form of transaction that connects sellers and consumers, creating an agreement between business actors and buyers. In practice, various goods are still traded directly (offline), including illegal stamina drugs that continue to circulate in the market. This phenomenon raises special concerns in the context of consumer protection law, particularly regarding direct sales transactions (Utami, F. D., & Herwastoeti, I., 2022).

According to information from the official website of the National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM) of the Republic of Indonesia during a 2023 press conference, around 700 illegal pharmaceutical items were seized. The evidence included drugs, traditional medicines, health supplements, cosmetics, and processed materials, with an estimated total value of Rp10,218,000,000. The circulation of illegal pharmaceuticals not only causes potential economic losses to the state but also threatens public health due to low quality and safety guarantees, with some even leading to death from side effects (Badan POM RI, 2023).

The circulation of illegal drugs is a form of transnational crime carried out by organized criminal networks with complex distribution patterns. According to Antonopoulos, as explained in his study, social network analysis of the "Operation Singapore" case revealed that the production and distribution of counterfeit drugs involve cross-country cooperation, utilization of international logistics routes, and document forgery to conceal product identities (Badan POM RI, 2023).

Bhagat (2025) in the Justice and Police Journal emphasizes that high demand, weak supervision mechanisms in several countries, and exploited international regulatory differences drive the growth of the global black market for pharmaceuticals. Both studies affirm that eradicating illegal drug circulation requires solid international coordination, cross-border intelligence sharing, and law enforcement aligned with preventive measures (Bhagat, K., 2025).

Based on Article 2 of Law No. 8 of 1999 on Consumer Protection, consumer protection implementation must be based on principles of benefit, justice, balance, consumer safety, and legal certainty. These principles are highly relevant in the context of illegal drug circulation as part of transnational crime (Republic of Indonesia Law No. 8 of 1999).

Therefore, the application of consumer protection principles as stated in Article 2 of Law No. 8 of 1999 serves as the main foundation in combating transnational crime related to illegal drug circulation in Pekanbaru City. The Pekanbaru BBPOM holds a strategic role not only limited to local supervision and enforcement but also contributes to cross-border cooperation to dismantle international illegal drug trade networks threatening public safety, security, and health.

METHOD RESEARCH

Research methods constitute the procedures that must be followed in a study to achieve the desired results. The approach used to collect necessary data is crucial because it directly influences the research outcomes. If the method employed is inappropriate, the results will differ from expectations and fail to provide the reader with a clear idea through the methods used.



According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is a method conducted to examine objects in their natural conditions, where the researcher serves as the key instrument. Data collection techniques involve triangulation (combined methods), data analysis is inductive, and the results emphasize meaning over generalization (Prasanti, D., 2018).

In this study, the author employs qualitative research targeting several objects under the supervision of the Pekanbaru City Big Post for Drug and Food Supervision (BBPOM), aimed at investigating illegal drug circulation.

To address the research problems, the author uses qualitative research methods. Qualitative research has a broad scope and can be classified into several types, including case studies, classroom action research, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, historical research, and hermeneutics (Syahrizal, S., & Jailani, M., 2023).

According to Lexy J. Moleong, a paradigm is a pattern or model describing how a structure is composed (including its parts and relationships) or how those parts function, within specific contexts or time dimensions. Meanwhile, Harmon defines a paradigm as a fundamental way of perceiving, thinking, evaluating, and acting on something related to a realistic vision (Syafuddin, S., Prasetyo, H., & Rahman, F., 2023).

DISCUSSION

Weak government supervision over market-circulated goods, as revealed by Hinjewadi (2020), creates strategic loopholes exploited by transnational crime networks to smuggle and distribute illegal drugs, including stamina enhancers, into Indonesia. Illegal drug trade not only violates Consumer Protection Laws but also threatens public health and poses potential economic losses to the state (Hinjewadi, A., 2020).

On the other hand, limitations in human resources, surveillance technology, and inter-agency coordination reduce law enforcement effectiveness. This aligns with Situational Crime Prevention theory in criminology, which emphasizes minimizing crime by reducing opportunities through enhanced supervision, access control, and effective situational prevention measures (Clarke, R. V., 1997)

1. General Overview of Illegal Drug Circulation in Pekanbaru City

The phenomenon of transnational crime in illegal drug circulation is critically important for public health, yet many unscrupulous actors continue selling these drugs for group or individual profit, posing severe risks to society in Riau Province.

Berdasarkan siaran pers Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan (BPOM) Republik According to a 2023 press release from Indonesia's National Agency of Drug and Food Control (BPOM), approximately 700 illegal pharmaceutical products were seized, including drugs, traditional medicines, health supplements, cosmetics, and processed materials, with a total value estimated at Rp10.218 billion. These findings not only cause potential financial losses to the state but also endanger public safety due to unverified quality and safety, including fatal side effects.

Furthermore, data from the official BPOM Riau Province website shows enforcement actions against freely sold illegal traditional medicines. Monthly production is estimated at 2,400–2,800 bottles, with an economic value of around Rp2.4 billion. These illegal activities impact state losses and amplify public health risks from non-compliant products.

Following the seizures, law enforcement alongside BPOM has taken firm legal action against involved parties. In Riau Province, proceedings remain at investigation and further prosecution stages for illegal traditional drug distributors. Under Article 435 jo. Article 138 paragraphs (2) and (3) of Law No. 17 of 2023 on Health, perpetrators face up to 12 years imprisonment or fines up to Rp5 billion

Many business actors still freely trade illegal drugs to the public. A Pharmacy Journal study found some market products contain banned active ingredients like sildenafil citrate. Testing 13 illegal drug samples revealed substances requiring medical supervision (Hakim, L., Setiawan, D., & Pratama, R., 2022).



The journal notes these drug contents are unfit for general consumption, potentially causing heart attacks or sudden death, harming users. In practice, Indonesia's government role in enforcing consumer protection laws remains weak, as evidenced by ongoing harmful trade cases despite regulations. Current consumer protection enforcement, especially market surveillance by the government, is inadequate.

In practice, Indonesia's government role in enforcing consumer protection laws remains weak, as evidenced by ongoing harmful trade cases despite regulations. Current consumer protection enforcement, especially market surveillance by the government, is inadequate. This stems from transnational crime, where illegal drug circulation—chemical or traditional—represents cross-border crime demanding attention due to significant impacts on health, safety, and the economy.

United Nations Office On Drug And Crime (UNDOC) defines transnational crime as offenses involving two or more countries, spanning production, distribution, and money laundering. In illegal drug cases, supply chains often involve foreign producers, international networks, and domestic sellers violating laws (Prahmana, R. C. I., Yuniarti, D., & Prasetyo, A. R., 2020). This requires attention from Pekanbaru BBPOM to patterns of transnational crime, including seizure data for illegal drugs.

Table 1.
 Enforcement Data By Pekanbaru BBPOM (2019-2023)

Wilayah	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Asia Tenggara	23	483	757	50	1.140
Asia	121	140	4.256	36	97
Eropa	45	343	1.654	1	3
Afrika	56	61	-	-	3
Jumlah	245	1.027	6.667	87	1.243

Source: Pekanbaru BBPOM

The table data shows increased seizures correlate with higher confiscated volumes when comparing cases to goods. With major contributions from Asia (4,256 cases) and Southeast Asia (757 cases), the 2021 surge to 6,667 cases likely matches peak seizures in 2019–2023. Conversely, the sharp 2022 drop to 87 cases indicates lower volumes, possibly due to altered distribution channels, smuggling techniques, or enhanced prevention.

2. Modus Operandi and Evasion Strategies in Riau’s Transnational Crime

Illegal drug circulation remains a serious public health and law enforcement issue in Indonesia. Beyond health impacts, it highlights criminals' sophisticated evasion tactics. Referencing Situational Crime Prevention (SCP) theory, strategies should raise barriers for offenders and detection risks. Here, perpetrators reverse SCP principles to protect themselves and minimize interventions.

To avoid suspicion from consumers or authorities, BJ and RH deliberately alter product forms to resemble common herbal remedies, though intended as drugs mixed with natural ingredients in pill or powder form.

However, strategies remain novel against Pekanbaru BBPOM enforcement. As BJ stated:

"I tried them all myself first, not just hearsay."

This perpetrator statement affirms confidence in their products. In practice, actors convince customers of quality despite illegality, serving as marketing and masking tactics that boost



consumer trust. Storage locations are strategically chosen to evade inspections or raids. Under SCP, this involves target removal and hiding illegal goods to hinder authority access.

These modus operandi show offenders exploit supervision weaknesses for swift distribution, acting deliberately to cut legal risks while maximizing profits. Manipulative packaging and storage reflect adaptation to social and legal environments. Thus, combating illegal stamina drugs requires more than repression: improved surveillance, public education, and stricter structural systems to deter such crimes.

3. Kominfo and BPOM Enforcement Systems Against Transnational Illegal Drug Crime

Collaboration between BPOM and Kominfo reflects systemic SCP-based efforts to prevent illegal stamina drug circulation, though violations persist. These focus on raising offender risks, reducing opportunities, and eliminating excuses. As noted by Buk Ola and Buk Syarnidah, BBPOM implements formal strategies for efficiency, especially in volatile digital sectors.

This resembles risk-elevation approaches. Post-market surveillance detects field errors, while pre-market licensing screens products beforehand. Additionally, outreach involves undercover buyer disguises, creating active uncertainty for perpetrators.

Overall, BBPOM-Kominfo systems provide enforcement infrastructure but fall short against digital crime speed and flexibility. For effectiveness, SCP frameworks demand multi-line strengthening: platform filters to block access, strict cyber patrols for detection, market education to cut profits, and robust legal-moral campaigns to remove excuses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research demonstrates that illegal drug circulation in Pekanbaru City constitutes part of transnational crime with serious impacts on public health, consumer safety, and the national economy. BBPOM Pekanbaru enforcement data reveals fluctuating trends with a significant case surge in 2021, indicating ongoing gaps in distribution oversight and weak prevention mechanisms. Perpetrators' diverse modus operandi—including product identity disguise and legal evasion strategies—highlight structured patterns exploiting supervision weaknesses.

These findings underscore the critical need for synergy among BBPOM, law enforcement agencies, and cross-sector institutions, including the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo), to enhance monitoring effectiveness in both offline and digital realms. Situational Crime Prevention principles should focus on reducing offender opportunities, increasing detection risks, and diminishing economic gains from illegal drug trade. Additionally, public education on illegal drug dangers and consumer protection campaigns must intensify to curb demand. Thus, combating illegal drug circulation requires not only repressive actions but balanced structural prevention, strengthened regulations, and broader public awareness.

REFERENCES

Antonopoulos GA, 'Operation Singapore: Social Network Analysis of Transnational Pharmaceutical Crime' *Journal of Criminology* (2021) 59(4) 512–530.

Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan Republik Indonesia, *Siaran Pers: Penindakan Obat dan Makanan Ilegal Tahun 2023* <https://www.pom.go.id> diakses 15 Agustus 2025.



Balai Besar Pengawas Obat dan Makanan Kota Pekanbaru, *Laporan Tahunan Pengawasan Obat dan Makanan 2019–2023* (BBPOM 2024).

Bhagat R, 'Global Black Market of Pharmaceuticals and Law Enforcement Challenges' *Justice and Police Journal* (2025) 77(2) 201–218.

G.H. Treitel, *The Law of Contract* (Thomson 2003).

Hernoko AY, *Hukum Kontrak* (AUP 2022).

Kamil I, 'Sidang Perdana Gugatan Praperadilan Lukas Enembe Lawan KPK Digelar Hari Ini' (Kompas.com, 2023) <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2023/04/10/06421011/sidang-perdana-gugatan-praperadilan-lukas-enembe-lawan-kpk-digelar-hari-ini> diakses 10 April 2023.

Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Remaja Rosdakarya 2019).

Patrik D, Suryanti N dan Suryamah A, 'Kedudukan Kreditor Minoritas Dibandingkan Dengan Kreditor Sekaligus Pemegang Saham Dalam Penundaan Kewajiban Pembayaran Utang' (2021) 4 *Media Iuris* 397–418.

Roy R. Goode, *Goode on Commercial Law* (LexisNexis Butterworths 2016).

Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Alfabeta 2020).

Undang-Undang Nomor 17 Tahun 2023 tentang Kesehatan (Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2023 Nomor 120).

Undang-Undang Nomor 36 Tahun 2009 tentang Kesehatan (Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 2009 Nomor 144).

Undang-Undang Nomor 8 Tahun 1999 tentang Perlindungan Konsumen (Lembaran Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1999 Nomor 42).

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2022: Illicit Pharmaceutical Markets* (United Nations 2022).

Zulherawan, M., Afrianda, R. T., & Setiawan, S. (2024). Manajemen Polda Riau Dalam Upaya Pengungkapan Kejahatan Narkotika Menggunakan Teknik Undercover Buy. *Jurnal Ilmiah Muqoddimah: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik, dan Humaniora*, 8(2), 484-489.

Zulherawan, M., Hakim, A. R., Tutrianto, R., & Joesyiana, K. (2023). Sosialisasi perlindungan anak dari bahaya narkoba di Kabupaten Pelalawan tahun 2022. *Dinamika: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 1(1), 1-6.