

Yudhi Nugraha: Clickbait Media And Research Overclaim In The Middle Of A Pandemic

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HumasUPNVJ - Information circulating about the discovery of a drug for COVID-19, has been written into **headlines** in several newspapers, which, when read, contains only false hopes. Therefore, Yudhi Nugraha, a lecturer at the UPN Veterans Jakarta Faculty of Medicine, wrote articles that were published on the Geotimes page related to news or information that could easily make people excited.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed more than 2,000 Indonesian people, has again made us aware that there is another crucial matter that must be addressed immediately in our beloved country, that is the research logic and the logic of empirical evidence by several researchers in Indonesia.

Exciting news about the discovery of the COVID-19 drug can easily be found in the mass media, television, newspapers, social media, even from government press conferences which are broadcast live by the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19. We are presented with illusive information which unfortunately is also presented by some researchers who understand how research concepts work in proving the validity of a finding.

Information circulating about the discovery of a COVID-19 drug, for example, is written into headlines in several newspapers, which, when read, contains only false hopes, unfinished research, or only potentials taken from literature studies of other countries, which are completely has not been proven in research procedures. What's worse, there was no effort of clarification from some of these researchers to straighten out the media coverage of their research.

The researchers (persons) should first prove their ideas and concepts in the laboratory and submit their results in the right places, such as reputable journals or at least, if they are chased during a pandemic, in

journal preprints, yes, at least what is claimed is preliminary research, not presentation. class literature review. Research publication aims to make research results read and analyzed, criticized by other researchers, and become a source and basis for further research to be developed by other researchers.

Another surprising thing is the antivirus overclaim made by one of the ministries in Indonesia. The steps for making your own antivirus are not that easy. Its effectiveness must be tested through extremely complex stages with randomized clinical trials to avoid bias and show that it is indeed the substance that is the antiviral of SARS-CoV2, not even a similar virus, because antiviral work at the molecular level is known to be very specific.

The optimum dose and concentration of the antiviral candidate must also be determined first. In addition, ethical clearance for research should be conveyed openly. Patent registration is only intended to legally protect intellectual works in the field of technology for patent owners, not at all to show the efficiency of drugs, antivirals or vaccines.

Theoretically, research aims to verify hypotheses, not when there is an allegation then immediately announced to the general public. This would be the same as graduating students who had just received a research proposal trial, without having a research results session.

The main pillars in research are the logical structure of science and testing of claims, currently these two pillars have been completely hit by overclaim in the midst of a pandemic. Two of the five norms of science according to Roberto Merton are universalism and skepticism. Universalism is a researcher's attempt to defend arguments on scientific grounds and traditions. While Skepticism itself is an attitude of not easily believing in something which eventually gives birth to data validation and truth testing.

The researcher treads a lonely path in his life for usefulness. It's rare for researchers to like the frenetic media, if there is one, it's usually because they are forced to educate, not to overclaim. Researchers always know their limits and their expertise, making it a bit awkward when asked about other things that are not in the realm of their research.

The general public must be educated that the steps to prove in research are not easy. Every detail of the process must eliminate the bias of the research results so that what really influences the results comes from the drug candidate, not a suggestion like the work of a paranormal.

Science is not strong in explanation but in argumentative proof. Indonesia is indeed lacking in science-communicators, but that doesn't mean that researchers who like television cameras can explain anything to the public as they please. Letting clickbait titles go around without trying to clarify. Researchers may be wrong, but do not lie. That is why even though what is conveyed is a hope, it could just be a false hope.

We still have a big homework to educate the media by checking the validity of information from its main sources, to avoid false claims or exaggerated claims. Academics also hope to always be involved in all considerations of Government decisions. With hope, the Government of Indonesia will increase the implementation of Evidence Based Policy Making (EBPM) or Evidence/Fact based Policy Making. Then what is the condition of the evidence base and the facts presented in a hurry by the researchers?

Maybe this article offends many (unscrupulous) researchers in Indonesia, yes it is true that is the purpose of this paper. My advice, hurry back to work that focuses on proof, don't be too hasty to share something where the hypothesis might still be rejected. Let's start understanding our mass media, which stutters about the world of research, to make news titles that are measurable and not become slaves to clickbait. Do not pawn the high integrity of researchers for the temptation of this pandemic momentum.

Finally, we also cannot blame the public who are more interested in this logically delusional conspiracy theory related to COVID-19, such as Bill Gates who is accused of being the culprit of the world pandemic for self-gain, or the theory of the Chinese Wuhan Lab which is suspected of being the place where SARS-CoV2 was made. .

The most dangerous thing is if the public no longer trusts researchers the same way they don't trust the prosecutors in the Novel Baswedan case, which charged the perpetrator with one year in prison because he was deemed unintentional.