

Pattern of Understanding and Awareness of Kratom Abuse among Secondary School Students in Kedah and Perlis

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ABSTRACT

This study is to identify the knowledge, understanding and awareness of secondary school students in Kedah and Perlis about the dangers of kratom abuse. The methodology of this study is in the form of field using survey method (questionnaire form) conducted on secondary school students in Kedah and Perlis in the number of samples who answered the questionnaire is a total of 1696 people (36 schools in Kedah and 9 schools in Perlis which is the highest case schools involved with kratom). The results of this study show that the pattern of knowledge and understanding of students in Kedah and Perlis expressed uncertainty about kratom. Similarly, the findings also show the pattern of awareness of students in Kedah and Perlis stated that they are aware that the abuse of kratom has adverse effects. Therefore, based on the results of the study, the authorities such as teachers who are closest to students other than parents provide information for them to know and understand the dangers of kratom abuse while always alerting them with accurate information from the right source from time to current in helping school students to overcome kratom abuse.

INTRODUCTION

Kratom tree, also known as Biak Tree is a plant from the Rubiaceae family that is abundant in Africa, in the north and central Peninsular Malaysia and in southern Thailand. In Thailand, this tree is called Kakum, Ithang or Thom, in the United States it is called Kratom. Its botanical name is *Mitragynaspeciosakorth* (Karl & Colin, 1988). Kratom has long been a traditional medicine as an energy-saving drink for women who have just given birth. The leaves are boiled and the water is drunk as an energy healer, also for the treatment of removing wind in the body and to treat back pain. However, the decoction of kratom leaves has been abused and started to be widely sold to ordinary consumers. Kratom addiction has also spread among school students in Kedah and Perlis where ketum addiction symptoms are rampant to date (Noorazura, 2014). Perlis Chief Minister, YAB Azlan Man expressed concern that kratom addiction symptoms are prevalent among adolescents and students in Perlis especially (Noorazura, 2014). He stated that from the information obtained, it is believed that 20 percent of high school students, including those who study in form one, become addicts of kratom leaf water mixed with batter known as "*cakoroi*". He stressed that the intake of kratom water or 'biak leaf water', especially involving students, should be seen as a serious problem. The director of the Kedah National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK) said that school children are also distributors to their other peers. The results of his survey in 'hotspot' areas that are often associated with kratom abuse activities, including in KubangPasu, Kota Setar and Padang Terap districts, found that the involvement of school students with ketum water was very worrying, although efforts were made in the form of information and counseling to school students, but still has not yielded positive results in dealing with kratom water addiction, especially school children. According to him, almost all districts in the state of Kedah are involved in the issue of kratom leaf water intake.

In overcoming the problem of kratom water intake now, the Chairman of the Kedah State Education, Transport and Works Committee, DatukTajulUrus Md. Zain said, it is time for all parties to play their respective roles to raise public understanding and awareness, especially among youths about the dangers of drinking kratom water which is also used as an alternative to drug addiction (Utusan Malaysia, 2014).The resolution refinement workshop conducted by AADK together with the agencies involved at the Kedah state level showed that there are 16 resolutions that have been reached in strengthening to overcome the problem of kratom water addiction where it includes 3 sub programs (prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and enforcement). One of the sub-programs emphasized is prevention which includes the disclosure of information on the correct understanding and awareness of kratom water abuse given to all school counselors in the state of Kedah.

Therefore, this article will discuss the pattern of understanding and knowledge as well as awareness of the abuse of kratom leaves among secondary school students in Kedah and Perlis.

CONCEPTS OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Knowledge means as a capacity to acquire, retain and use information (a mixture of understanding, experience, wisdom and skills). This mastery of knowledge requires two main complementary foundations, namely the concept of an object is defined as a whole where it requires the ability to think, while the second is a concept obtained through perception where it requires sensory power to understand something (Ibrahim, 1995). The concept of understanding means understanding with something knowledge in mind about something. Definition of understanding also means the ability to translate ideas from one form to another, interpreting ideas, effects and consequences aimed at providing understanding in order to realize something better (Lamberg& Lamb, 1980).

CONCEPT OF AWARENESS

Awareness is defined as any behavior, experience and change received by an individual through external members and will be re-evaluated by their thinking (Azemi, 1997). According to Feigelman and Feigelman (1993) and Mohanaraj (2003) on the problem of adolescents involved with drug abuse as a solution. The school as an institution needs to impart all knowledge to drug abuse students. School is the most effective place for students to gain knowledge and learn and apply various knowledge. Therefore, teachers are considered as the most effective intermediaries to convey all information related to well-being and apply and practice a healthy lifestyle throughout life (Kathleen, 2005).

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to MohdNoorazamet al. (2010), have made a study focusing on drug abuse among school children and youth. However, relevant parties such as teachers, syllabus drafters need to further improve the quality of teaching and learning techniques as well as formulate the topic of drug abuse as part of the subject. The implementation of this topic needs to be more effective in the effort to produce a younger generation who have enough knowledge about drug abuse before stepping into the world outside of school. Interventions and Initiatives carried out should aim to produce school children who have sufficient knowledge related to the problem of drug abuse so that today's generation understands and is clear about the long-term effects of drug abuse. Joint venture programs should be made with the involvement of parents, teachers and authorities such as AADK in ensuring that the teaching of drug abuse has a profound and lasting impact on students.

Meanwhile, another symptom of substance abuse has arisen, namely sniffing glue. According to Maizatul (2007), the awareness and concern of the public and certain parties is still less on these symptoms compared to drug abuse. The community thinks this problem is not serious and looks trivial even though it is actually an epidemic that is spreading if not curbed immediately, especially among school students. As a precautionary measure, legislation should be enacted and awareness should be given to the community about the dangers of substance abuse (sniffing glue). Therefore, the role of family institutions, especially parents, is not only limited to providing for the needs but also ensuring that children are not easily influenced by the symptoms of this glue nose.

A study conducted by Ais (2013), aims to examine the impact of SHIELDS drug prevention program on student development in Mersing district, Johor based on Kirkpatrick model where this study focuses on aspects of training followed, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The results of the study showed that all four aspects studied produced a positive reaction. Participants are satisfied with the training followed, gain knowledge and can improve skills, change attitudes and benefit in the form of drug avoidance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the SHIELDS program conducted by AADK Johor in Mersing district is effective for program participants in an effort to improve the quality of life to avoid drugs.

A study Hansen in 1992 for prevention programs found that knowledge to reach the neutral level of 40%, whilst the affective program reaches 40% and positive social impact shows positive level which is much higher at 63%. Hansen suggested that drug education and prevention programs should cover a wide range of components and use multiple approaches. Social influence is the biggest influence, but Hansen (1992) does not deny the importance of knowledge programs. In other words, the program will not achieve its objectives without the presence of other approaches. Education and prevention programs should take into account aspects of information delivery on drugs, emphasis on value aspects, goal setting, self-improvement, self-invitation skills, decision-making skills, stress management, life skills training, outreach assistance and offering alternative activities (Hansen, 1992).

METHODOLOGY

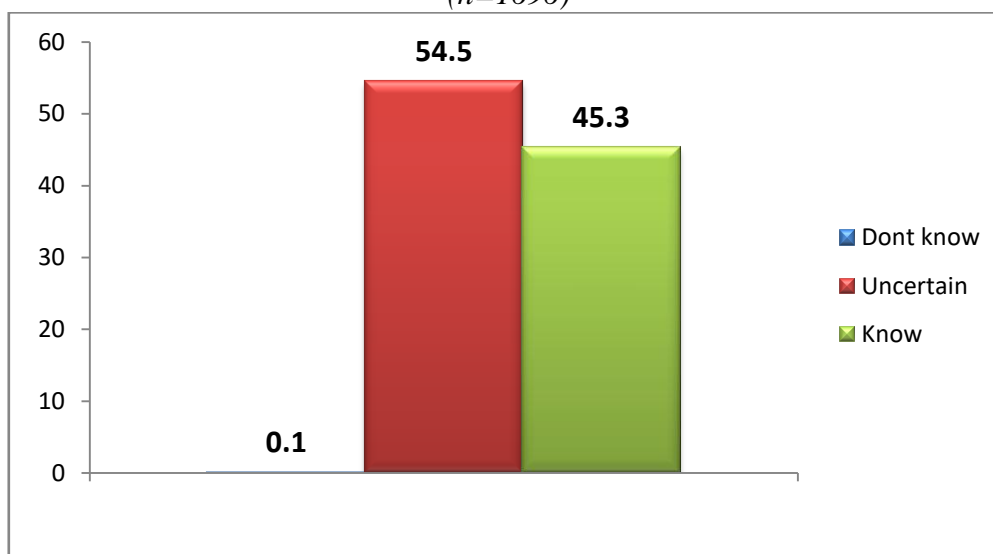
This study is in the form of a field that uses a survey method (questionnaire form) conducted on secondary school students in the states of Kedah and Perlis since survey method was used in social science studies (Jdaitawi, 2020; Rababah, et al., 2012; Jdaitawi, 2020; Jdaitawi, Al-Mutawa, Mussallam, & Talafha, 2014). The total number of samples (simple random sampling) that answered the questionnaire was 1696 people (36 schools in Kedah and 9 schools in Perlis which are the highest case schools involved with kratom leaf water) as suggested by the State Education Department to see the level of knowledge and understanding as well as awareness about kratom leaf water. The results of this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics SPSS 21.0 software to describe the data and data presentation using Graph Bar to see the overall percentage.

RESULT

Patterns of Knowledge / Understanding of Kratom Leaf Water

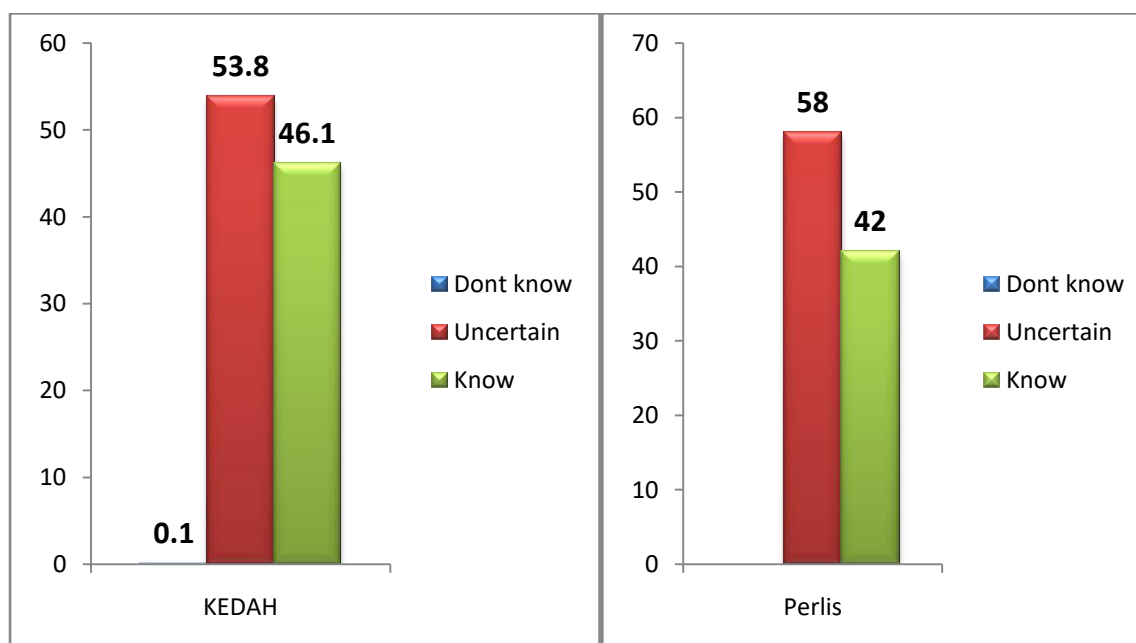
Looking at Graph Bar 1 shows the pattern of knowledge and understanding of students as a whole, the majority of which is 54.5% of respondents stated that they are uncertain about kratom leaf water. 45.3% of respondents know about ketum leaf water and 0.1% didnt not know about ketum leaf water.

Graph 1: Percentage of Students According to the Pattern of Knowledge / Understanding of Kratom Leaf Water (n=1696)



Looking at the comparison between students in Kedah and Perlis, Graph Bar 2 shows the pattern of knowledge and understanding of students in Kedah, the majority of which is 53.8% of respondents stated that they are uncertain about kratom leaf water. 46.1% of respondents know about kratom leaf water and 0.1% do not know about kratom leaf water. Similarly, students in Perlis stated the pattern of knowledge and understanding of the majority of students, namely 58% of respondents stated that they were uncertain about kratom leaf water and 42% of respondents knew about kratom leaf water

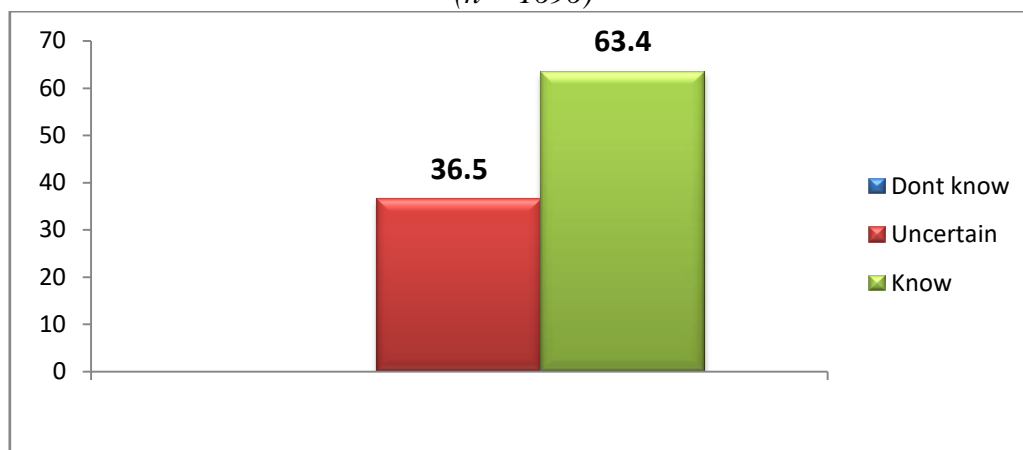
Bar Graph 2: Percentage of Student Comparison in Kedah and Perlis According to the Pattern of Knowledge / Understanding of Kratom Leaf Water



Pattern of Awareness Kratom Leaf Water

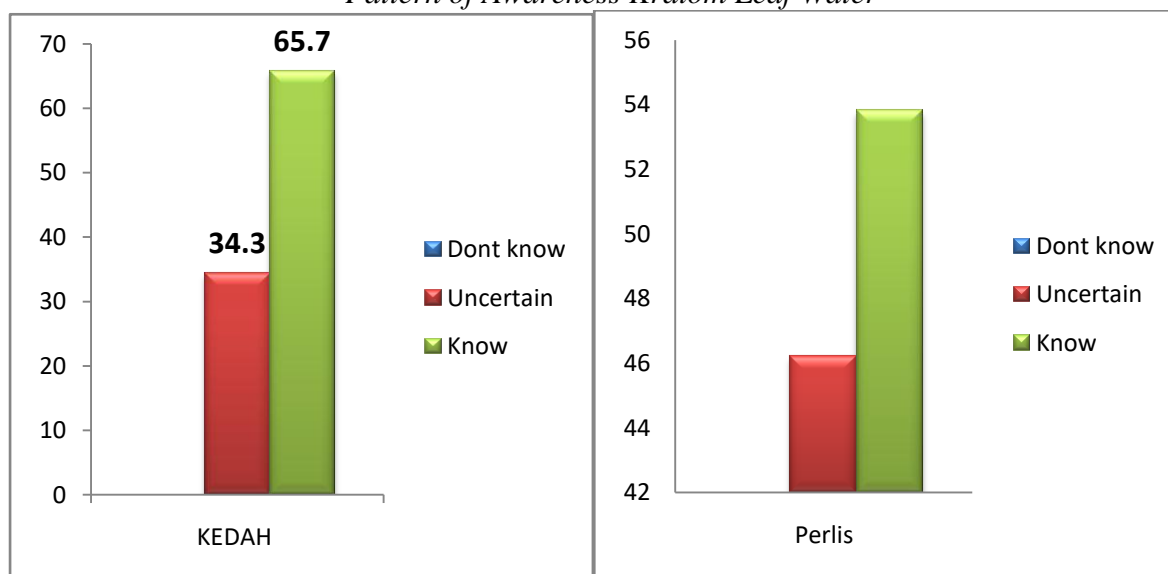
For the pattern of awareness among students as a whole about kratom leaf water Graph Bar 3 shows that the majority of students who are 63.4% are aware that the abuse of kratom leaf water brings danger to society. Only 36.5% of respondents stated that they were unsure or unaware that kratom leaf water abuse led to their health.

Bar Graph 3: Percentage of Students According to the Pattern of Awareness Kratom Leaf Water
(n = 1696)



For the pattern of awareness among students in the state of Kedah about kratom leaf water Graph Bar 4 shows that the majority of students who are 65.7% are aware that the abuse of kratom leaf water brings danger to society. Only 34.3% stated that they were unsure or unaware that kratom leaf water abuse led to their health. As for the pattern of awareness among students in Perlis, the majority of students, 53.8%, are aware that the abuse of kratom leaf water brings danger to the community. Only 46.2% stated that they were unsure or unaware that kratom leaf water abuse posed a danger to their health.

Bar Graph 4: Percentage of Student Comparison in Kedah and Perlis According to the Pattern of Awareness Kratom Leaf Water



DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the pattern of knowledge and understanding of students in Kedah and Perlis is not sure about kratom leaf water. In overcoming the pattern of knowledge and understanding of school students according to Feigelman et.al (1993) and Mohanaraj (2003), the best information to be conveyed to students is through their teachers. The issue of presenting information to school children effectively can only be implemented through learning and teaching in schools (MohdNoorazam et.al (2010).

The results of a questionnaire with school students in Kedah and Perlis on awareness show that the majority is aware that the dangers of kratom leaf water abuse can lead to danger to their health. This finding coincides with a study by Maizatul (2007), who stated that drug addiction including kratom water should not be underestimated by society at all levels because its effects can have a negative impact on a person.

The conclusion from the above discussion can be concluded that all school students, should be exposed in depth about the basic knowledge and understanding of kratom water and the dangers of its intake. Based on basic knowledge in perception and knowledge through centuries of oral stories, the delivery of information to the target group of school students is incomplete, and sometimes misinformation. Similarly, through awareness, although the majority is aware of the dangers of kratom leaf water abuse, it needs to be warned from time to time so that they do not get involved with the unhealthy symptoms.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study explores the knowledge, understanding and awareness of secondary school students in Kedah and Perlis about the dangers of kratom leaf water abuse. The results of the study show that the pattern of knowledge and understanding of students in Kedah and Perlis expressed uncertainty about kratom leaf water. The findings also show the pattern of awareness of students in Kedah and Perlis stated that they are aware that the abuse of kratom leaf water has adverse effects. Therefore, based on the results of the study, the authorities such as teachers who are closest to students other than parents provide information for them to know and understand the dangers of kratom leaf water abuse as well as always alert them with accurate information from the right source. from time to time in helping school students to overcome kratom water abuse.

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