**Presence Of Keratinophilic Fungi In Schools Playing Grounds In Sagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** A total of 80 soil samples was examined from 10 school playinggrounds in Sagamu city for the isolation and identification of keratinophilicfungi using hair baiting technique. Results from this study revealed sixspecies of of organisms belonging to three different genera viz; *Aspergillus*, *Penicillium* and *Trichophyton.* The prevalence rate of these organisms were *Aspergillus niger* 45 (15.56%), *Aspergillus flavus* *45(35.56%), Aspergillusfumigatus 45(15.56%), Pencillium species 45(15.56%),Trichophtyonrubum* 45(11.11%) and *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* 45(6.65%). This studytherefore confirmed the biodynamism of the isolated organisms in theschools playing ground studied.

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**Introduction**

Keratinophilic fungi are keratin degrading fungi (Ulfig, 2003; Jain and Sharma, 2012) present in the environment with variable distribution patterns (Sharma and Sharma, 2010; Jain and Sharma, 2012) and are known to be affected by both intrinsic factors such as pH, moisture content and mineral contents of the soil as well as certain extrinsic factors such as temperature (Moraga *et al*.,2007).The occurrence of these organisms in man’s natural and man made habitat is well documented (Ganaie *et al*.,2010; Mini *et al*.,2012; Kacinova *et al*.,2013) and their Keratin utilizing attributes has been well studied (Ulfig, 2003;Sharma and Sharma,2010;Jain and Sharma, 2012). Of these keratinophilic fungi, the dermatophyte are the most important medically (Sharma and Sharma, 2010) as the latter has been linked with various dermatophytic infection. Dermatophyte are fungi which requires keratin for growth and can cause different type of tinea in human (Mahmoudabad and Zarrin, 2008). Sagamu, a city in Ogun State, South West Nigeria, was chosen for this study because of its tropical climate and geographic diversity that favours the distribution of the studied fungal mycoflora. In view of this, this study was aimed at determining the prevalence of keratinophilic fungi circulating in school playing grounds in Sagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria.

**Materials And Method**

**Study Site**

Sagamu is one of the 20 local government in Ogun State, Nigeria, having latitude 120160N and 60220E longitude with land area of 614km2.

**Collection Of Soil Samples**

80 surface soil samples of depth not exceeding 2-3cm were collected with the aid of a presterilized aluminium pan from selected schools playing ground in Sagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria. These surface soil samples were collected in presterilized aluminium pan (40cm x 80cm), each of these aluminium pans was labeled indicating the date and site of collection. These samples were tightly closed to maintain its original moisture content and then kept in a dark cupboard at 28±20C, for not more than 2 days before analysis.

**Baiting Of The Soil Sample**

This was carried out using the method described by Vanbreuseghen (1952). Each of the soil sample was thoroughly homogenized and 10g portion of the soil sample was put in each of the sterile petridishes. These soil samples were wetted with sterilized distilled water to provide moisture to the soil. The presterilized hair samples used has not been exposed to deodorant before and were scattered uniformly on the wet soil in the petri dishes. Each of the Petri dishes were separately labeled indicating the date, site of collection and time of incubation. These petri dishes were then incubated at room temperature (28±20C) for one month but with intermittent checking at intervals for fungal growth, if any, on the baited hair samples. Samples with visible fungal growth were subsequently subcultured to a new petri plates.

**Isolation, Purification And Identification Of Fungi**

The baits showing clear evidence of fungal growth were picked with the aid of a sterilized forcep for sub-culturing unto two different Saboraud dextrose agar ((SDA) ZAYO–SIGMA, Belgium) fortified with 0.05mg/ml of chloramphenicol alone and the other plate containing both 0.05mg/ml and 0.5mg/ml of chloramphenicol and cyloheximide respectively. The plates containing chloramphenicol is aimed to check bacteria growth alone while that containing chloramphenicol and cycloheximide was to inhibit both bacterial and saprophytic fungal growth respectively. All the plates showing mixed growth of fungal isolates were purified before being identified using standard microbiological technique (Sharma and Sharma, 2010).

**Results**

Table 1 depicts the attributes of the school playing grounds sampled for keratinophilic fungi in Sagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria. A total of 10 School playing grounds (primary and secondary) were randomly identified and used for this study. The land area and the laboratory code used for each of the soil samples from the school playing grounds were well documented. The occurrence of keratinophilic fungi in schools playing ground in Sagamu, Ogun State, are represented in table 2. The keratinophilic fungi isolated includes *Aspergillus niger*, *Aspergillus flavus*, *Aspergillus fumigatus*, *Penicillium Species, Trichophyton rubum* and *Trichophyton mentagrophytes*. *Aspergillus flavus* was the most predominantly isolated organisms from the schools playing ground soil sampled with the prevalence rate of 35.56% (45). This was followed by *A. niger, A. fumigatus* and *Penicillium species,* all with percentage distribution rate of 15.56%(45). 8 strains of dermatophytes belonging to 2 different species viz *Trichophyton rubrum* and *Trichophyton mentagrophyte* were also isolated from the school playing grounds. In total, 45 strains of fungal microflora belonging to six different species were isolated from the school playing grounds (Table 3). The macroscopic and microscopic characteristics of the isolated keratinophilic and dermatophytic organisms are represented in table 4.

TABLE 1 Attribute of the school playing ground, sampled for keratinophilic fungi in Sagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | School Playing ground | Location | Code | Land area | Number of Species collected code use |
| 1 | St. Paul Primary School | Makun | PAM | 105x68M | 4(PAM 1 PAM2, PAM 3, PAM 4) |
| 2 | United African Methodist Church School Eleja | Eleja | PGE | 103x63M | 4(PGE1, PGE2, PGE 3, PGE4) |
| 3 | AUD Nursery and Primary School | Isale oko | PGAPS | 103x63M | 4(PGAPS1, PGAPS 2, PGAPS 3, PGAPS 4) |
| 4 | Batoro Community Grammar School | Isale Oko | PGB | 103x63M | 4(PGB 1, PGB 2, PGB 3, PGB 4) |
| 5 | Wesley School II Oko | Ita Oba | PGI | 100x60M | 4(PGI 1, PGI 2, PGI 3, PGI 4) |
| 6 | African Church Primary School | Ijoku | PGIJ | 100x64M | 4(PGIJ 1, PGIJ 2, PGIJ 3, PGIJ 4) |
| 7 | Sagamu High School | Makun | SHS | 103x66M | 4(SHS 1, SHS 2, SHS 3, SHS 4) |
| 8 | Local Government Primary School | Agura | LG | 105x68M | 4(LG 1, LG 2, LG 3, LG 4) |
| 9 | Muslim College | Sabo | PGMS | 105x68M | 4(PGMS 1, PGMS 2, PGMS 3, PGMS 4) |
| 10 | Methodist High School | Ijoku | MHS | 105x68M | 4(MHS 1, MHS 2, MHS 3, MHS 4) |

|  |
| --- |
| Table 2 Occurrence of keratinophilic fungi in schools playing ground in |
| Sagamu, Ogun State, Nigeria. |
| Playing grounds Keratinophilic fungi |

n AN AF AFU PS TR TM

PAM 1 2 + + - - - -

PAM 2 2 + + - - - -

PAM 3 2 - - - + - -

PAM 4 2 - - - + - -

PGE 1 2 - - - + - -

PGE 2 2 - - - - + -

PGE 3 2 - - + - - -

PGE 4 2 - + - - - -

PGAPS 1 2 - - + - - -

PGAPS 2 2 - - - + - -

PGAPS 3 2 + + - - - -

PGAPS 4 2 - - + - - -

PGB 1 2 - - + + - -

PGB 2 2 - - + - - -

PGB 3 2 - + - - - -

PGB 4 2 - + - - - -

PGI 1 2 - - - - - -

PGI 2 2 - - + + - -

PGI 3 2 - + - - - -

PGI 4 2 - - + + - -

PGIJ 1 2 - - - - + -

PGIJ 2 2 - - - - + -

PGIJ 3 2 - + - - -

PGIJ 4 2 - + - - - -

SHS 1 2 - - - - + -

SHS 2 2 - + - - - -

SHS 3 2 - + - - - -

SHS 4 2 - - - - - +

LG 1 2 + - - - + -

LG 2 2 + - - - - -

LG 3 2 - - - - - -

LG 4 2 - + - - - +

PGMS 1 2 - + - - - -

PGMS 2 2 - - - - - -

PGMS 3 2 - - - - - +

PGMS 4 2 - - - - - -

MHS 1 2 + + - - - -

MHS 2 2 + + - - - -

MHS 3 2 - + - - - -

MHS 4 2 - - - - - -

+ = Present

- = Negative

AN *= Aspergillus niger*

AF *= Aspergillus flavus*

AFU = *Aspergillus fumigates*

*PS* =  *Penicillium species*

*TR* = *Trichophyton rubrum*

TM = *Trichophyton mentagrophytes*

n = Number of samples collected from each location

Table 3 **Prevalence of keratinophilic fungi and other dermatophytes in schools playing ground**

|  |
| --- |
| Keratinophilic/Other  Dermatophytes n % |
| AN 7 15.56  AF 16 35.56  AFU 7 15.56  PS 7 15.56  TR 5 11.11  TM 3 6.65 |
| TOTAL 45 100 |

**Discussion**

Keratinophilic fungi are important ecologically and recently have attracted attention throughout the world. They play a significant role in the natural degradation of keratinized residues (Sharma and Rajak, 2003; Fillipello *et al*.,1994, Fillipello,2000). These organism are known to share some characteristics with dermatophytes and some can probably cause human and animal infections (Restrepo and Deuribe, 1976;Alli-shatayeh *et al.,*1989;Connnole, 1990; Cano *et al*.,1991; Filipello *et al*.,1996; Speiwak,1998;Spiewak and Szstak,2000). Of the isolated keratinophilic fungi*, Aspergillus* *flavus* was the most predominant, with prevalent rate of 35.56% (45). This observation is contrary to that of Mini *et al*.(2012) who reported *Aspergillus niger* as the most prevalent in their own study. The reason for this observation may not be unconnected to differences in the study site, as well as the study region. In recent years, a lot of studies documented, the presence of keratinophilic and dermatophytic fungi in soil (Jain and Sharma, 2012;Mini *et al.,* 2012; Kacinova *et al.,*2013; Mahmoudabadi and Zarrin, 2008; Ganaie *et al*.,2010). The presence of these organisms in the soil is not surprising as this environmental conditions is well known as the source of varieties of micro organisms (McCoy *et al*., 1992; Moraga *et al*.,2007) including Keratinophilic fungi. Some of the isolated organisms especially *Aspergillus* and *Penicillium* species are important mycotoxin producing organism (Aish *et al.,*2004; Speijers,2004). Mycotoxin are secondary metabolites produced by some fungal isolates known not to be toxic to the producer but to the consumer of the substrate containing them (Kuiper – Goodman, 2004). It was concluded that the investigated playing grounds harbors arrays of keratinophilic fungi.

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