Title: Babassu Black yeast flora and Chromoblastomycosis

Authors: Nascimento, M.M.F.\textsuperscript{1,2,8}, Vicente, V.A.\textsuperscript{1,6}, Furuie, J.L.\textsuperscript{1}, Gomes, R.R.\textsuperscript{1}, Gelinski, J.L.M.N.\textsuperscript{1,5}, Bittencourt, J.V.M.\textsuperscript{3}, de Hoog, G.S.\textsuperscript{1,2,4,8}

Institution: \textsuperscript{1}UFPR - Universidade Federal do Paraná (Av. Cel. Francisco Heráclito dos Santos, 210, Jardim das Américas, Curitiba - PR), \textsuperscript{2}CBS – Fungal Biodiversity Centre (P.O. Box 85167, 3508 AD, Utrecht, The Netherlands), \textsuperscript{3}UTFPR - Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná (Av. Monteiro Lobato, s/n, km 04, Jardim Carvalho, Ponta Grossa - PR ), \textsuperscript{4}UVA - University of Amsterdam (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), \textsuperscript{5}UNOESC - Universidade do Oeste de Santa Catarina (Rua Paese,198, Universitário, Videira - SC), \textsuperscript{6}CNPq - Fellowship from Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa e Desenvolvimento , \textsuperscript{7}CAPES - Fellowship from Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – Programa Pesquisador Visitante Especial (PVE)

*Corresponding author: s.hoog@cbs.knaw.nl

Abstract:

Black yeasts are Ascomycetes and all members of the group are obligatorily melanized and colonizes the most diverse niches. A significant portion of the black yeast species and their filamentous relatives(?) are regularly encountered as causative agents of human mycoses. Chromoblastomycosis is a chronic, progressive cutaneous and subcutaneous fungal infection characterized by presence of muriform cells inside the tissues, which represent the invasive form of the fungus. Considerate a traumatic infection which starts after the implantion of fungal elements of etiologic agents. Fonsecaea pedrosoi is the main etiological agent in Brazil, and the Maranhão state region is considered an endemic area of the disease. Thus, this work aim to determine the presence of Chromoblastomycosis etiological agents on babassu (Orbignya phalerata) coconuts. Six samples of babassu coconut were collected in São Luís, Maranhão state. For the isolation of black yeast the selective Oil flotation method was used. Molecular identification of the isolates was performed by sequencing the ITS region and the sequences obtained were compared with the CBS (Fungal Biodiversity Centre) database. A total of 106 isolates of black fungi was obtained using the selective method. The ITS sequence data of the isolates were attributed to the genus Cladophialophora, Exophiala, Rhinocladiella and Veronaea. Based on the isolation results we could see that Black yeast species isolated are not related with species found in clinica data and we also discovered the ecological niche of Cladophialophora mycetomatis, thus far only known from a single subcutaneous infection. Among these isolates, there were two species of clinical interest: Exophiala spinifera and Veronaea botryosa, however until now in Brazil were not reported any clinical case caused for
these species. Both species have been reported causing infections in human hosts, however \textit{Veronaea botryosa} has been repeatedly encountered in human infections worldwide and cause severe disseminated infections in patients without known underlying immune disorders. From these results, it was observed that the Oil Flotation technique used was specified for environmental isolation of black yeast and enables to elucidate aspects of the ecology of these microorganisms.

\textbf{Key works:} Babassu, chromoblastomycosis, black yeast, \textit{Cladophialophora mycetomatis}

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