

ENVIRONMENTAL ISOLATION OF *CRYPTOCOCCUS NEOFORMANS* BY SWABBING TECHNIQUE FROM DECAYED WOOD TRUNK OF LIVING TREES IN JABALPUR

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ABSTRACT : The aim of this study is to report regional prevalence of *Cryptococcus neoformans* in decayed wood inside trunk hollows of different living trees. Twenty one tree species were investigated in Jabalpur City. Fifty - five wood samples were collected and processed by swabbing technique, 29 were found to contain strains of *Cryptococcus*. The numbers of trees positive for *Cryptococcus neoformans* were 16 (76.19%), the highest CFU (3.4×10^4) was found in *Butea monosperma* and lowest CFU (1.1×10^4) was found in *N. oleander*. Among our samples, nine tree species, viz., *Annona squamosa*, *Mallotus philippensis*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Saraca asoca*, *Nyctanthes arhor-tristis*, *Delonix regia*, *Nerium oleander*, *Tectona grandis*, and *Citrus aurantifolia* were recorded as the host for *Cryptococcus neoformans* for the first time in Central India. The data on high prevalence fungal population density colonization and available isolations indicate that decayed wood in trunk hollow of living trees is a habitat for *C. neoformans*. Attention is drawn to the likely health hazard posed by the environmental reservoir of *C. neoformans* occurring in tree trunk hollows in proximity to human and animal habitations.

Key words : *C. neoformans*, Decaying wood, Jabalpur, Swabbing technique