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Research Article

THE FORAY OF THE FUNGUS

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ABSTRACT

Fungi are the diverse group of saprophytic and parasitic eukaryotic organisms. Now placed in kingdom Mycota. Fungi produce and secrete a variety of metabolic products. They are toxic to animals and humans. Fungi cause poisoning and infections. Pneumocystis is the cause of lethal pneumonia of immunocompromised patients. Previously, considered this as a parasite but now included in fungi. Aspergillosis in immunocompromised patients, leukemia patients and bone marrow transplant patients produce serious complications and finally death. Candida albicans produce diaper rash, oral thrush, vulvovaginitis. Histoplasma produce progressive pulmonary disease similar to pulmonary T.B. Blastomycosis produce skin lesions. In AIDS patients cryptococcosis, the second most common fungal infection (After candidiasis) is potentially most serious. Fungus is sophisticated than virus and bacteria They have cell walls, but lower than plant and animal(1). During this period several fungi such as Actinomyces, Candida albicans, Cryptococcus neoformans, were isolated, cultured, identified and described(2).

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INTRODUCTION

Ingestion of toxic species due to erroneous identification resulted in acute discomfort, severe illness or even death (5) Mostly oral candidiasis is observed in new born, aged and debilitated patients.(6) Infection by *C. albicans* is found in mouth and intestinal tract of a large number of humans (7) The other species of candidiasis are *C. parapsilopsis*, *C. tropicalis*, *C. stellotoidea* etc (8). The deep oral candidiasis may be painful, Oral lesions also produced(9). Oral candidiasis is a disease mainly of a new born and of debilitated or aged patients and in persons treated for weeks or months with broad spectrum antibacterial antibiotics.(10). Candida endocarditis is characterized by fever, heart murmur, congestive heart failure and anemia. These cases are found in drug addicts.(11) *C. albicans* causes most frequently the meningeal candidiasis.(12) In sputum both budding cells and pseudomycelia can be seen.(13). It produces spherical clusters of blastospores or yeasts on media. (14). However, the infants

or children acquire *A. Israeli* from other infected persons (15) *A. fumigates* is generally an occupational disease.(16). *A. fumigates* is also found during early stages of decomposition of vegetables. On trimmed portion of trees in city streets, the wood chips are over grown by *A. fumigates* (17) *A. fumigates* being a saprophyte luxuriantly grows on decaying organic materials, decaying organic materials. Through inhalation into the lungs of human and get established inside the lung tissues It causes pulmonary aspergillosis (18) Myocardial aspergillosis can be fatal. (19) Otomycosis is caused by several fungal species but more specifically by *A. niger*. *A. fumigates* grows rapidly and forms white cottony colony which later on turns like velvet. After production of spores, it becomes dark green and powdery.(20) However, neurotoxin and other toxins are also isolated which possibly are involved in hemorrhagic lesions produced in birds and animals (21). In addition, the polysaccharides of *A. fumigates* have been found antigenic. Immune serum of

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rabbit has prevented the effect of toxins in experimental animals (22) Otomycosis of ear which is characterized by inflammation, scaling, pruritis and pain. (23) Otomycosis is characterized by inflammation of the ear. (24) A clinical diagnosis should be confirmed by microscopic observation of the mycelial plug and scales in order to be sure for treatment through anti fungal or antibacterial drugs (25) One should avoid swimming until the infection is fully cured (26) Huang and Harris (1963) have reported that *P. commune* caused disseminated pulmonary and cerebral penicillin in a patient with acute leukemia and gastrointestinal candidiasis (27)

History

It is presumed that humans started collecting mushrooms as food in prehistoric times. Mushrooms were first written about in the works of Euripides (480-406 B.C.). The Greek philosopher Theosophist of Eresos (371-288 B.C.) was perhaps the first to try to systematically classify plants; mushrooms were considered to be plants missing certain organs. It was later Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.), who wrote about truffles in his encyclopedia *Naturalis historia*. Historically, mycology was a branch of botany because, although fungi are evolutionary more closely related to animals than to plants, this was not recognized until a few decades ago. Pioneer *mycologists* included Elias Magus Fries, Christian Hendrick Person, Anton de Barry, and Lewis David von Schweinitz. The word *mycology* comes from the Greek meaning "fungus" Logos means study. The start of the modern age of mycology begins with Pier Antonio Michel's 1737 publication of *Nova plant arum genera*. Published in Florence, this seminal work laid the foundations for the systematic classification of grasses, mosses and fungi.

Significant Gap in Research

The use of fungi for unlocking the full potentials of the bio economy relies on such progress. The fungal kingdom can be an inspiration for even more.(28)Skin tests for fungal diagnosis cannot distinguish between past and present infection. Positive test indicates exposure to the antigen. Conversion of negative skin test to positive indicates good prognosis. Reversion of a positive test to negative reflects poor prognosis and indicates allergy. Mainly used in sero epidemiology.

Major Advances and Discoveries

Candida albicans remains the most important fungal pathogen and is frequently associated with oral.(31) Some fungal species especially those that cause systemic mycoses, and dimorphic, being usually yeast-like in one environment mold like in another.The sub cutaneous micoses are not transmissible from human to human under ordinary conditions. The wide range of clinical manifestations of histoplasmosis makes it a peculiarly complex disease, often resembling tuberculosis(34) *Coccidioides immitis* is endemic in South Western United States, California, Texas, Mexico Arid soil in and around rodent burrows is a common reservoir for hyphae and arthroconidia. Infection results from inhalation of arthroconidia. Non immune individuals visiting endemic area can develop this infection after overwhelming inhalation exposure

Where the Research go next?

Fungal infections represent approximately fifteen percent of all nosocomial infections in intensive care units in United States with *Candida* species being the most commonly occurring fungal pathogen. In AIDS patients, cryptococcosis, is the second most common fungal infection after candidiasis, is potentially more serious. Because the mechanism of action of anti fungal drugs, such as amphotericin, involves interfering with ergosterol synthesis or function, these drugs are useless or ergosterol-lacking fungi. *Candida albicans* produce systemic or superficial infection. It produce oral or esophageal thrush in immuno compromised (neonates, steroids, drugs, Diabetes, AIDS), vulvo vaginitis (diabetics, use of anti bio tics),diaper rash, endocarditis in intra venous drug users, disseminated candidiasis (to any organ), Tropical azole for vaginal, Fluconazole for oral Fluconazole and Amphoteticin B for systemic. *Aspergillus* produce lung cavities especially after TB infection. It also produce allergic bronchi pulmonary aspergillosis (ABPA) with asthma. Some species of aspergillosis produce aflatoxins.

Current Debate

The incidence of opportunistic mycoses has significantly increased, owing to a growing population of susceptible individuals. Risk factors for opportunistic Aspergillosis, systemic candidiasis, Zygomycosis) include AIDS, diabetes, lymphomas, broad spectrum antibiotic therapy and immuno suppressive therapy (eg Corticosteroids, Radiation therapy and cytotoxic drugs. infections represents 15 % of all Hospital acquired infections in intensive care units in the US. Out of them *Candida* species is the most common fungal pathogen. Because the mechanism of action of anti fungal drugs, such as amphotericin, involves interfering with ergosterol synthesis or function, these drugs are useless for ergosterol-lacking fungi. Anti fungal therapy has become established as standard practice in hematology and oncology units over the past decade and its use is increasing. A number of agents have been evaluated and intravenous amphotericin B has emerged as the drug of choice. Evidence of its benefit is limited and only clearly demonstrated in patients not receiving prior anti fungal prophylaxis.(32) Prof Cornily developed the first prophylaxis against fungal infection and successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of high-dose therapies for patients already infected. His guidelines for treating mucor mycosis, which are the first in the world, will serve as a foundation for additional standard treatments in India where infections caused by mu cor fungi are common. Prof Cornell's findings are also internationally highly relevant for cancer therapies; Immune systems of cancer patients are often compromised by treatment which increases the risk of fungal infection.(33)

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