

## ISOLATION OF *Cryptococcus neoformans* var. *neoformans* IN DECAYING WOOD FORMING HOLLOW IN A TREE OF *Caesalpinia peltophoroides* (LEGUMINOSAE), SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL.

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Evidences on the role of fenoloxidase in lignin degradation and the presence of *Cryptococcus neoformans* var. *neoformans* in rotten wood, led to a search for new habitats of the yeast besides pigeon droppings. The presence of *C. neoformans* var. *neoformans* was detected in decaying wood forming hollows in the trees *Syzygium jambolana*, *Cassia grandis*, *Senna multijuga* and *Ficus microcarpa* in the City of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and *Ficus pandurata* in Peru.

In this study we collected decaying wood from hollows of trees located on the campus "Cidade Universitária" (Universidade de São Paulo). Collects were done in 83 trees including *Caesalpinia peltophoroides*, *Cassia* sp, *Erythrina speciosa*, *Eucalyptus* spp., *Ficus microcarpa*, *Syzygium jambolana* and *Tibouchina granulosa*. Samples were suspended in sterile physiological saline and shaken. Then, 0.1 ml of the supernatant was plated in Sabouraud dextrose agar and DOPA agar. Suspected colonies were isolated and identified.

In decaying wood from one tree of *Caesalpinia peltophoroides*, *C. neoformans* var. *neoformans* was isolated. In the first collect (July/98), the sample presented  $7,2 \times 10^4$  CFU per gram of wood; in a second collect (September/98), the sample presented  $1,3 \times 10^4$  CFU per gram of wood. We believed that this number of CFU in two consecutive collects were not casual.

This is the first report of the presence of *C. neoformans* var. *neoformans* in a hollow of *Caesalpinia peltophoroides*. Both varieties of *C. neoformans* are known as the etiologic agent of cryptococcosis in São Paulo city. In AIDS patients of this city, 7% presents cryptococcosis due to *C. neoformans* var. *neoformans* as the first clinical manifestation of immunodeficiency. So, the identification of sources of this fungus in the urban environment is of great importance for a better understanding of the epidemiology of *C. neoformans* at this city.