Lack of standardization in the procedures for mycological examination of sputum samples from CF patients: a possible cause for variations in the prevalence of filamentous fungi

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Résumé en anglais	Filamentous fungi and yeasts are increasingly isolated from respiratory secretions of patients with cystic fibrosis (CF), and persistent fungal colonization of the airways of such patients is thought to exacerbate lung damage. While many independent studies have identified Aspergillus fumigatus complex as the principal colonizing fungus in CF, increased awareness of the role of fungi in CF pathology coupled with improved mycological culture and identification methods have resulted in a number of other fungi being isolated and reported from CF sputum samples, including A. terreus, members of the Pseudallescheria boydii/Scedosporium apiospermum complex, Exophiala dermatitidis, Paecilomyces and Penicillium species. However, the range of fungal pathogens isolated and the relative prevalence of individual species vary widely between reports from different geographical CF centres, and as yet no standardized method for the mycological examination of CF sputum samples has been adopted. Here, we examine the potential contribution of the mycological methods employed to examine CF respiratory secretions relative to the variability in the fungal biota reported. The role of direct microscopic examination of respiratory samples and the impact of the culture conditions used on the detection of specific fungal pathogens are addressed, and the potential significance of isolation of yeast species from CF patient airways is discussed.
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