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ISOLATION OF NON-*ALBICANS* SPECIES FROM ORAL CANDIDAL INFECTIONS

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The fungal infections of the oral mucosa most frequently encountered are those due to species of the genus *Candida*. *C. albicans* is the principal species associated with infection, but other species such as *C. glabrata*, *C. tropicalis*, *C. parapsilosis* and *C. krusei* are also pathogenic to man (Samaranayake and MacFarlane, 1990). However, variable degrees of involvement of non-*albicans* species have been documented in the literature. These values are 22.68 % (St. Louis VA Medical Centre USA, 1993), 17.60% (Hospital Tarnier Spain, 1994) and 50% (Instituto Nacional de Microbio Argentina, 1997). So far there were no studies to evaluate the role of *Candida* species as etiological agents of oral infections in a Sri Lankan cohort. Further, there are limited reports on the role of non-*albicans* species in the above mentioned infections. Hence the aims of this investigation were to evaluate the contributory role of *Candida* species in oral infections of patients attending the Peradeniya Dental Hospital and to investigate the percentage prevalence of non-*albicans* in these infections.

A total of 27 patients who were clinically suspected to be having candidal infections were screened for the presence of *Candida*. The lesions of these patients were swabbed and cultured onto Sabouraud's dextrose agar, supplemented with an antibiotic solution. Gram's stain was performed on the suspected *Candida* colonies. Thereafter, the isolates were speciated using the germ tube test and growing on Chromo Slants (*Candida* identification system, Kanto Chemicals, Tokyo, Japan).

When the data were analyzed, 63 % of the patients reported with candidal infections. Of the total candidal infections 17.60 % were non-*albicans* with two *C. glabrata* and a single isolate of *C. parapsilosis*. Thus, confirms the findings of the previous investigators.