

CLASSIFICATION OF FUNGI

Fungi can be classified by their morphology. Yeasts are the unicellular form of fungi and are generally spherical. On the other hand, moulds are the filamentous form of fungi mainly consisting of mycelium, an interweb mass of hyphae. Some fungi can be dimorphic, which means that they can interchange between the two forms depending on the environment. This characteristic is important for pathogenesis of some fungi.

Different pathogenic fungi have different mechanisms of infecting humans in terms of location and infection types. For superficial mycoses, fungi are found on the physical barriers such as the skin, nails and hair as well as on mucosal surfaces such as mouth and vagina. Fungi that cause subcutaneous mycoses are found deeper within the layer of the skin. Those that cause systemic mycoses can invade deeper tissues and internal organs.

In terms of metabolism, fungi can be classified as thermophilic, psychrophilic, acidophilic and halophilic.

The spores formed by fungi can also be used as classification. Zygomycota produces zygospores as its sexual spore and sporangiospores as its asexual spore. Ascomycota, also known as sac fungi produces conidia and is characterised by the sac-like appearance of the cells. Basidiomycota are also known as club fungi which produces basidiospores. Other types of spores formed by fungi are arthrospores and blastospores.