

Research Article

A New Taxon *Rhytidhysterion ephedracearum* on Medicinal Plant *Ephedra foliata* Boiss ex CA Mey from Central India**Shikha Jain and A N Rai**

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Abstract

During the frequent and routine survey for mycotaxonomic evaluation of fungal diversity of Dr Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya Campus Sagar, an eye catching fungal symptom was observed and collected on medicinal plant *Ephedra foliata* Boiss ex CA Mey (Ephedraceae) during December 2020. The collected fungal sample upon detailed taxonomic investigations proved to be an undescribed novel taxon *i.e* *Rhytidhysterion ephedracearum* sp nov. This novel species (*Rhytidhysterion ephedracearum*) has smaller ascomata, asci, and ascospores as compared to the other allied species. It is also remarkable that no fungal species of *Rhytidhysterion* (Spreng) Speg has ever been reported either on this host or host family (Ephedraceae). Host plant *Ephedra foliata* (Ephedraceae), is an advanced member of gymnosperms and an important source for the alkaloid, ephedrine, used in traditional medicines for the treatment of chronic asthma and associated respiratory problems. Increased management of *Ephedra* is highly needed due to the threat posed by the changing environment, especially due to its unique medicinal properties.

Key words: Ascomycetes, *Ephedra foliata*, gymnosperm, mycotaxonomy, *Rhytidhysterion*

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