

Mold of the Month October 2008

Cunninghamella sp.



Colony of *Cunninghamella* sp.



Sporangiospores of *Cunninghamella* sp.

Colony Description

The growth rate of *Cunninghamella* sp. is rapid. It can become mature in 4 days. Colonies are expanding, with abundant floccose mycelium. The colonies colors are cottony and white to tannish-gray. The reverse is pale.

Microscopic Morphology

The hyphae are usually broad and non-septate. The sporangiospores are erect and form short lateral branches. Each of the sporangiospores terminates in a swollen vesicle. The vesicle has spine-like denticles on its surface. Sporangiospores are spherical to globose in shape. They are gray, smooth-walled, 1-celled, and solitary. The sexual spores are called zygospores which are brown and spherical.

Ecology

Cunninghamella sp. belongs to Zygomycota. It is a filamentous fungus found in soils and plant material. It has also been recovered from animal material, cheese, and Brazil nuts.

Health Effect

Cunninghamella sp. Can cause zygomycosis. Zygomycosis is reported in patients with diabetics, AIDS, and Leukemia. The infections usually start with inhalation of spores or inoculation of the fungus through skin openings.