

# Kolkata man, world's first, to catch fungal infection from a plant

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**In news**—The first case of a **potentially deadly fungal infection caused by plants** was discovered in a man from Kolkata.

## **Key updates-**

- The 61-year-old, a plant mycologist, complained of **a recurring cough, hoarseness of voice, difficulty swallowing**, a sore throat and fatigue for three months.
- He had no history of diabetes, HIV infection, renal disease, any chronic disease, immunosuppressive drug intake, or trauma.
- The man, who wasn't named had been working with decaying material, mushrooms, and various plant fungi for a long time as part of his research activities.
- Doctors performed an X-ray and CT scans on the man. The X-ray on the chest came back "normal", but the **CT scan results showed a paratracheal abscess in his neck.**
- **Paratracheal abscesses can block airways and lead to life-threatening infections**, which can be deadly if not caught and treated quickly.
- Doctors removed the pus and sent a sample for testing to the "WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference & Research on Fungi of Medical Importance", where he was diagnosed with *Chondrostereum purpureum*.
- **Chondrostereum purpureum is a plant fungus that causes silver leaf disease in plants**, particularly those in the rose family. **This is the first instance of a plant fungus causing disease in a human.** Conventional techniques (microscopy and culture) failed to identify

the fungus.

- Only through sequencing could the identity of this unusual pathogen be revealed. This case highlights the **potential of environmental plant fungi to cause disease in humans** and stresses the importance of molecular techniques to identify the causative fungal species.
- The patient received a course of antifungal medication, and after two years of follow-up, the patient was absolutely fine, and there is no evidence of recurrence.

### What is paratracheal abscess?

- A parapharyngeal abscess is a deep neck abscess.
- The development of a paratracheal abscess is an underappreciated complication of tracheal intubation.
- Symptoms include fever, sore throat, odynophagia, and swelling in the neck down to the hyoid bone.
- Diagnosis is by CT. Treatment is antibiotics and surgical drainage.

