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| Journal Name: | [**Asian Journal of Research in Botany**](https://journalajrib.com/index.php/AJRIB) |
| Manuscript Number: | **Ms\_AJRIB\_141058** |
| Title of the Manuscript: | **Diagnosis of fungi contaminating local and imported fruits in Kirkuk using PCR** |
| Type of the Article |  |

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| PART 1: Comments | | |
|  | Reviewer’s comment **Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated or assisted review comments are strictly prohibited during peer review.** | **Author’s Feedback** (It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here) |
| **Please write a few sentences regarding the importance of this manuscript for the scientific community. A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.** | **This manuscript is important to the scientific community as it explores the fungal organisms that infects in fruits resulting in spoilage and serious economic loss. The author has explored the molecular method of identifying and characterising these fungal agents and this is an important step in helping the farmers preserve their produce better to prevent economic losses** | This study helped identify fungal contaminants affecting various local and imported fruits in Kirkuk city by combining traditional agricultural techniques with molecular polymerase chain reaction (PCR), which enabled accurate diagnosis of pathogenic fungi that infected the plants identified in the study. The results revealed five predominant fungal species: Aspergillus fumigatus, Aspergillus niger, Mucor spp., Candida krusei, and Candida tropicalis. These species pose numerous risks to food safety available in the markets. These results are considered of great importance in agricultural practices in developing regions. Therefore, this research contributes to serving the scientific community by focusing on improving monitoring methods and preventive strategies to reduce fungal contamination in agricultural products available in Kirkuk city markets. |
| **Is the title of the article suitable?**  **(If not please suggest an alternative title)** | **Yes, it is** | yes |
| Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? Do you suggest the addition (or deletion) of some points in this section? Please write your suggestions here. | **The manuscript has a comprehensive abstract** | yes |
| Is the manuscript scientifically, correct? Please write here. | The manuscript is scientifically correct. The author can improve on it by presenting the tables in a scientifically acceptable standard (Table 1). The contrast of the gel pictures (the writings and numbering) should be improved if the publication will be coloured. | The manuscript was revised based on reviewer comments; Table 1 was reformatted to an acceptable scientific standard, and the quality of the images was improved by adjusting the contrast of the gel images, including the numbering, which was further clarified for clarity in the color publication file. |
| **Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestions of additional references, please mention them in the review form.** | The references are sufficient, but the author needs to correct a few errors pointed out in this section. That is reference number 7 and 8 which will change the numbering of the references. | The error of reviewers 7 and 8 in the references section has been corrected and the remaining sources have been re-arranged based on the corrections made. |
| Is the language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications? | The quality of the English Language is suitable for scholarly communication | Very good |
| Optional/General comments | **The research was well put together.** | This research is a summary of the results of my master's thesis, which took several months of preparation, experiments, work, and research. Therefore, in my opinion, it is excellent research, and I hope it will be of scientific benefit to all researchers around the world. |

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| **PART 2:** | | |
|  | **Reviewer’s comment** | **Author’s comment** *(if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)* |
| **Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?** | *(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)* | There are no ethical issues related to my research as this research or study includes only plants or fruits infected with fungi and does not include human samples, animal samples or any personal data. |