

# Fungal Antigens

Fungi are microorganisms in the domain eukarya. They show less differentiation than plants, but a higher degree of organization than the prokaryotes bacteria. The kingdom of the fungi (Mycota) comprises over 50 000 different species, only about 200 of which have been identified as human pathogens. Only about a dozen of these “pathogenic” species cause 90% of all human mycoses. Many mycotic infections are relatively harmless, for instance the dermatomycoses. In medical mycology, fungi are classified according to practical aspects as dermatophytes, yeasts, molds, and dimorphic fungi. Molds grow in filamentous structures, yeasts as single cells and dermatophytes cause infections of the keratinized tissues (skin, hair, nails, etc.). Dimorphic fungi can appear in both of the two forms, as yeast cells or as mycelia.