

Antifungal effect of Australian tea tree oil on *Malassezia pachydermatis* isolated from canines suffering from cutaneous skin disease.

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Schweiz Arch Tierheilkd. 144: 215-21; 2002

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The lipophilic yeast *Malassezia pachydermatis* is part of the normal skin flora of most warm-blooded organisms. In a number of surveys it could be demonstrated that this yeast species might be involved in different skin diseases like seborrhoeic dermatitis, especially in dogs and cats. In order to look for an alternative therapeutic agent to the commonly used antimycotic and antiseptic synthetic substances the in vitro activity of Australian tea tree oil, the essential oil of *Melaleuca alternifolia*, against several strains of *Malassezia pachydermatis* was examined. All tested strains showed remarkably high susceptibility to tea tree oil. With these results the excellent antibacterial activity of tea tree oil is extended to a new group of fungal pathogens colonizing mainly mammals' skin. During the last ten years there was an increasing popularity of tea tree oil containing human health care products. The presented data open up new horizons for this essential oil as a promising alternative agent for topical use in veterinary medicine as well.