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Title: The olive mill wastewater as substrate for single cell oil production by Zygomycetes

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Abstract: The conversion of olive mill wastewater (OMW) into high added value lipids containing polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA), in parallel with a significant phenolic removal by selected strains of Zygomycetes, is reported here for the first time. The growth of *Mortierella isabellina*, *Mortierella ramanniana*, *Cunninghamella echinulata*, *Mucor* sp., *Thamnidium elegans* and *Zygorhynchus moelleri* on solidified media was not significantly affected by the presence of OMW used in the growth medium up to 50% (v/v). Kinetic parameter values and conversion yields, estimated using a mathematical model which was fitted on the experimental data originated from submerged cultures, shows the ability of some Zygomycetes (i.e. *T. elegans* and *Z. moelleri*) to grow on OMW and accumulate storage material, i.e. lipids rich in PUFA, and these findings open new perspectives in OMW management and valorization. In liquid media containing OMW as sole carbon source, *T. elegans* and *Z. moelleri* produced 4.4 and 3.5 g/L cell mass in surface (SC) and submerged (SMC) cultures, respectively, containing around 60% (w/w) of lipids. Oleic and palmitic acids were the predominant fatty acids. Gamma-linolenic acid was found in high percentages (up to 17.7%, w/w) in the lipid of *Z. moelleri*, in SMC with OMW as sole carbon source, while PUFA biosynthesis was not favored in SC. (C) 2013 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

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