EDITOR’S COMMENT

In as much as the authors of this paper titled “Screening and Detection of Aflatoxigenic Moulds and Aflatoxins in Maize and Millet Grains Marketed in Zaria Metropolis”, the paper cannot be accepted for publication in its present form. The paper will need to be completely revised. The authors must first ask themselves, what do we really want to report? How have we carried out our investigations and analysis? Is it scientific and reproducible? What were the significant findings? Is this coherently and intelligently discussed?

1. The authors would need to revise the title so that it would be clear what they aimed at studying. One is not sure whether the authors are detecting or screening for fungi contaminations of these cereals or what.

2. In the abstract: The authors can simply state that “The present study was aimed at detecting the presence of fungi in maize and millet grains commonly marketed in Zaria Metropolis.

3. The authors must clearly state what the study design is. Is the study an observational, laboratory based, analytical, prospective or retrospective etc. This is what study design is about. Not the number of samples.

4. In the results of the abstract, there were mix ups. Detection of the organic and inorganic nutrients were not what the authors set out to do in the first place. And detecting the Aspergillus species were significant. But were the Aspergillus species, the only fungi species they authors detected in the grains? It must be stated what were the other.

5. In the Introductory section of the paper, the authors were also writing about the toxins as well as the species. This did not flow smoothly. The authors will need to state what the study was focusing its attention on – fungi species (Aspergillus spp) or the products – toxins. This should be stated in the aim of the study. This was not stated here in the introduction.

6. All through the paper, the authors were using numbers to substitute for the names of the authors they were citing. All through my years I have never seen where authors would write and say as reported by [8], standard reference by [10], described by [11], findings of [13], [14], reported by [16] etc. This is a lack of basic knowledge or understanding of work done or writing techniques. This manuscript can be entirely REJECTED based on this alone. The writing was not scientifically done.

7. Results and discussions are not coherent. Again this stemmed from the fact that authors failed to indicate what their attention, aim or focus were in the study design and they way it was carried out. The authors can wholly focus on detection of Aspergillus species in commercial grains sold to the public. By all standard, there is not supposed to be contamination of food items by fungi that is sold or consumed. The authors can also by extension study the production of toxins by these grains. This must be compared with grains from other sources, but here in this current study, the authors did not show any proof of quality control. And this is a laboratory analysis. How can one be convinced that what the authors claimed were
Aspergillus species were indeed what they were? Standard procedures does not seem to have been followed.

8. The Figures presented by authors makes no sense. A picture of the fungus growing on the media plate would have made more meaning and significant than what is presented in Picture 1 and 2. And Picture 3 is even worse. One cannot make out what that picture really is.

**AUTHOR’S FEEDBACK**

Kindly find below my feedback with regard to your comments.

1. The Title of the paper has been revised as suggested “Detection of Aflatoxigenic Moulds and Aflatoxin in Maize and Millet Grains marketed in Zaria Metropolis”

2. The suggestion with regard to abstract has been duly noted and effected.

3. The study is a laboratory base research which was corrected.

4. In the first place, the organic and inorganic nutrients were reported because they are the results of proximate analysis carried out to investigate the level of those nutrients that have significant effect on the growth of fungi, which subsequently influence the toxin productions. On the other hand, the study is specific on aflatoxigenic mould (*Aspergillus flavus* and *Aspergillus parasiticus*) and they are major aflatoxin producers in grains. This is the reason why the research focused on *Aspergillus* species only.

5. The study focused both on the *Aspergillus* species and the toxins production of the species and the introductory part of the paper highlighted this. The study aimed at detecting the Aflatoxigenic species (table; 3) and toxins production (table; 4 and 5). Hence the aim stated “Detection of aflatoxigenic mould and aflatoxin…” ‘The product is the aflatoxin’.

6. The names of the Authors are now included.

7. The study aimed at detecting the aflatoxigenic fungi and the toxin which is the secondary product of the fungi and all these were well carried out by standard procedure of laboratory base research. And each step of the methodology was thoroughly explained. Most of the food sold are usually displayed in open market that are prone to contaminations by these fungi since their spores are in the air, as such the research surveyed the possibility of such contamination and compared with the standard provided by Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON) and National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration Control (NAFDAC) and subsequently recommended for quality assurance to set up monitoring steps to vendors at the point of sale and storage. In the issue of the species, standard procedure was followed to identify the species using Atlas and microscopic identification as presented in the picture 2b.

8. The picture 2 presented was the photomicrograph of the fungi identified using microscope and Atlas. However, additional picture was supplied showing the fungus growing on the media. And picture 3 was the photo of the fungus viewed under Ultraviolet light which was carried out in the Darkroom. As such the picture will not be clear, but for those that have the knowledge, they know that the screening of the toxins production with the aid of UV light, were the growing fungus will be placed under the UV light in the Darkroom and view to observe the intensity of the fluorescence light. Therefore, the picture has significant meaning in the research.

Finally, I appreciated your valuable and constructive criticisms.