

A new species of *Axinyssa* Lendenfeld, 1897 (Porifera, Demospongiae, Halichondrida) from the Senegalese coast

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Abstract

Axinyssa djiferi, a new species of *Axinyssa* Lendenfeld, 1897 (Porifera, Demospongiae, Halichondrida) is described from the mangrove roots along the Senegalese coast. This species is close to the type species of the genus *Axinyssa topsenti* Lendenfeld, 1897 described from the Indian Ocean. Both share two categories of oxea, presence of fistules with apical oscules, conules in which the choanosomal tracts end in brushes and tangential skeleton between the conules. They differ in the size of the oxea, the shape of the smaller oxeas, the type of spicule in the ectosomal tangential skeleton, and in their respective geographical distributions. The description of this new species gives grounds for reassessing the synonymy between *Axinyssa* and *Pseudaxinyssa* Burton, 1931.

Key words: Porifera, Demospongiae, Halichondrida, *Axinyssa*, Senegalese coast, NE Atlantic, mangrove

Introduction

A large-scale survey of sponges from the Atlantic coast of Senegal by the University of Dakar has been in progress since 1983. About 70 species of Porifera have been recorded along the Atlantic coast of Senegal from the intertidal zone to 500 m depth (Lévi 1952, 1956, 1960; Boury-Esnault 1983; Borojevic & Boury-Esnault 1987).

The main interest of this extensive survey was to find new natural products including compounds of pharmaceutical interest. Since the pioneering work of Bergmann (Bergmann & Kind 1942; Bergmann *et al.* 1945; Bergmann & McTigue 1948; Bergmann & Feeney 1950) the interest in chemical compounds found in sponges has increased during the last twenty years of the 20th century (Munro *et al.* 1999). During this period, about 15