

Editor's Comment:

Decision: The paper can be accepted after considering the important points mentioned in the report:

The paper can be accepted after considering the following important points:

1- **Replace** the word IDENTIFICATION in the title (line 2) with the word CHARACTERIZATION

2- **In results:** lines 108 and 109 the following is not correct (Bergey's manual of determinative bacteriology 9th edition (1995), and the correction is (Bergey's manual of determinative bacteriology 9th edition (1994)

3- **In Materials and Methods section:** we must mention that the characterization of the isolates was carried out according to Bergey's manual of determinative bacteriology 9th edition (1994), and then mentioning this reference in the final references list. Please refer to the following link for this reference:

<http://www.worldcat.org/title/bergeys-manual-of-determinative-bacteriology/oclc/28183643>

4- In Conclusion: please keep the first paragraph only as it is, and transfer and include the rest into the discussion section as follows:

In conclusion----- Cleaning up of petroleum hydrocarbons in the subsurface environment is a real world problem. A better understanding of the mechanism of biodegradation has a high ecological significance that depends on the indigenous microorganisms to transform or mineralize the organic contaminants.

In discussion ----- Microbial degradation process aids the elimination of spilled oil from the environment after critical removal of large amounts of the oil by various physical and chemical methods. This is possible because microorganisms have enzyme systems to degrade and utilize different hydrocarbons as a source of carbon and energy. This paper describes the study on the isolation and identification of petroleum (crude) oil-degrading bacterium from contaminated oil region. Out of the total fourteen bacterial isolates, the eight genera isolated are promising organisms with degradation capability and this selected bacterial isolates could be effective in cleaning oil spills or oil contaminated soils accordingly with their prevalence; *Pseudomonas* spp. 21.43%, *Bacillus* spp. 21.43%, *Aeromonas* spp. 14.29%, *Citrobacter* spp. 14.29%, *Acinetobacter* spp. 7.14%, *Corynebacterium* spp. 7.14%, *Staphylococci* spp. 7.14%, and *Flavobacterium* spp. 7.14%. The result of the present study revealed that the soil in Zuma, Bwari area council, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, in Nigeria harbours hydrocarbon degraders which are useful in bioremediation of oil polluted soils in the region. The biases associated with culture-dependent microbial enumeration techniques limited the full description of the bacterial diversity in these soil samples (Chikere *et al.*, 2009a, 2009b; Lawson *et al.*, 2013 and Ekhaize and Nkwelle, 2011). It is an established fact that more than 90% of micro-organisms in the environment may not be culturable and as such, can only be detected with molecular methods used in the field of metagenomics (Edlund and Jansson, 2006).

5- Concerning references please refer to the following:

- In line 44: match the reference (Capelli *et al.*, 2004) with that in the final list (Capelli, S. M., Busalmen, P. J. and De Sánchez, R. S. (2001).)
- In line 44: the reference (Kim *et al.*, 2004) is not found in the final list
- In line 53: the reference (Rahman *et al.*, 2002) is not found in the final list
- In line 54: the reference (Jain, 2011) is not found in the final list
- In line 71: the reference (Francy *et al.*, 2000) is not found in the final list
- In line 139: complete the reference with year (Obire and Nwaubeta, 2002)
- In lines 136 and 152: match the reference (Okpokwasili, 2000) with that in the final list (Okpokwasili, O. (2000).
- In lines 143 and 150: match the reference (Adesemoye *et al.*, (2006) with that in the final list (Adesoye.....2006).
- In line 151: match the reference (Amanchukwu *et al.*, 2000) with that in the final list (Amanchukwu, U. I., Okoro, E. S. and Lawson, E. (2013).
- In line 184: the reference (Atlas, R. and Bragg, J. (2009) is not found in the paper body text
- In line 239: the reference (Zhao, H. P., Wang, L., Ren, J. R., Li, M. and Gao, H. W. (2008) is not found in the paper body text

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