Reviewer’s report

Title: Some Strychnos spinosa (Loganiaceae) leaf extracts and fractions have excellent antimicrobial activities and low cytotoxicities

Version: 1 Date: 29 September 2014

Reviewer: Gary Dykes

Reviewer’s report:

This is a limited but well written, scientifically sound and interesting study is appropriate for this journal. Some major compulsory revisions need to be addressed.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. Lines 1 and 56: The use of the word “excellent” in the title and other parts of the text is not appropriate. This is a subjective term. It should be deleted from the title. In the text (abstract) it can be replaced with more moderate or objective term.

2. Lines 105-106: Further details about the preparation of the leaves is required. How long were the leaves dried for? On/in what? What was the temperature (or temperature range)? Was the shade partial or complete? Were they protected from contamination? How were they ground? How is “fine” defined? How were they stored in the dark? In what container? At what temperature? For how long?

3. Line 138: Bacillus cereus is a Gram positive species. This should be corrected here and elsewhere in the text where it is suggested that more than one Gram negative species has been examined.

4. Lines 139-140: The authors should differentiate between the yeast and moulds instead of just calling everything fungi. This has been shown to be a relevant differentiator of activity in other studies.

5. The authors have examined a very limited range of bacteria, yeasts and moulds. It is well established in the literature that different bacterial and fungal species, but more importantly different strains within those species, may be more or less sensitive to antimicrobials. The author should discuss this issue as a limitation of their study and point out that a much larger number of strains from each species need to be tested for sensitivity before any major conclusion can be drawn.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests