Retracted: Assessing Taro (*Colocasia esculenta* (L.) Schott) Leaf Blight Incidence, Severity, and Farmers’ Knowledge of the Disease in Fako Division of Cameroon

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors MCT and LAF designed the study. Authors MCT, OAN and LAF carried out the experiments. Authors EYM and JEN performed the statistical data. Authors MCT and EYM wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors EYM and JEN managed the analyses of the study. Authors EYM and OAN managed the literature searches. Authors MCT, OAN and JEN revised the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Taro leaf blight (TLB), a major disease of taro plant caused by *Phytophthora colocasiae*, a pseudo-fungus, that occurs in many taro producing areas, especially in the South West of Cameroon. A Survey was conducted to assess farmers’ knowledge, as well as to determine the incidence and the severity of the disease in taro fields. Structured questionnaires were administered in selected

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locations (Bokova, Ekona, Muea, Mile 16, Mutengene, and Likomba) of taro production. Two farms were selected with two quadrats of 64 m² each were carved to assess disease incidence and severity on taro. The number of plants infected with taro leaf blight were counted and the area of the affected leaves measured was used to evaluate the disease incidence and disease severity. Data collected were subjected to ANOVA for complete randomized design and the means were compared using Tukey test at 0.05 probability levels. The results revealed that most of the farmers could identify the disease while practicing cultural methods in controlling the disease. The results also revealed significant differences ($p = 0.001$) in disease incidence and disease severity in all the localities, with Mile 16 showing the highest percentage mean of 96.53% and 85.59%, respectively. The severity scored showed high infection range of 3 – 3.95 in all locations except in Likomba (2.60). It could be concluded from the results that there were high prevalence of taro leaf blight disease in Fako Division. Good management strategies are therefore required to control Taro leaf blight and improve taro production in the area.

Keywords: Phytophthora colocasiae; taro leaf blight; disease incidence; disease severity; farmers’ knowledge.