

# “Pathogenic Microbes in beach sands? It’s a fact! What can we all do about it?”

João Carlos Simões Brandão

Medical Mycologist, Reference Unit for Parasitic and Fungal Infections - Department of Infectious Diseases, Instituto Nacional de Saúde/National Institute of Health

## **ABSTRACT:**

Beach water is often monitored for microbiological quality to detect the presence of indicators of human sewage contamination so as to prevent public health outbreaks associated with water contact. However, despite popular belief that sun light sterilizes surfaces, beach sand harbors microbes harmful to human health, often in concentrations greater than the beach water. Currently, there are no standards for monitoring, sampling, analyzing, or managing beach sand quality. Growing evidence has identified pathogenic bacteria, viruses, and fungi in a variety of beach sands worldwide. Regulatory agencies need to address this problem: Quality needs to be monitored, contaminations need to be controlled and the public should be made aware of where to rest and what children play with on a day spent at the beach.

**Bio:** Dr. Brandao is an Applied Chemist-Biotechnologist, specializing in clinical mycology and environmental research. He conducts research in these two areas of expertise and also lectures at Lusófona University in Portugal. Currently - staff of the National Institute of Health, internal accreditation auditor and national delegate of the Portuguese Association of Medical Mycology to the European Confederation of Medical Mycology (ECMM council member).