

INTRODUCTION AND AIM OF THE WORK

Almost 150 years ago, Gruby described favus and isolated its aetiological agent, thus introducing mycology as the first of the microbiological sciences. In the years that followed, mycotic infection was recognized as a highly prevalent public health problem (Nauceri, 1989).

The number of cases of mycotic infections are increasing, presenting physicians today with an unprecedented challenge in handling the treatment and prophylactic control of these disorders. The increase in mycotic infections is due to many factors, such as; longer life span, organ transplantation, new and more potent antibiotics, and the acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome. Thus the need for more effective and less toxic antifungal therapy will intensify (Paul and Jacobs, 1990).

The scientific development of antimycotics has lagged behind the development of antibacterials. This is due to the fact that, antibiotics inhibit a physiological process which is critical only to the micro-organism and thus selectively inhibit or kill the pathogen without harming the human. Because of the fundamental differences between the physiology of eukaryotic mammals and the prokaryotic bacteria it has been relatively easy to develop antibacterial agents. These agents are for the most part potent efficacious, and safe (Rippen, 1986).

Fungi, like man, are eukaryotic and both possess similar highly evolved, complex metabolic processes. This similarity between human and fungi cells appears to have made the development of antimycotics difficult and slow (Sande and Mandell, 1985).