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MOLECULAR EVOLUTIONARY ANALYSIS OF PADDY PEST, *COFANA SPECTRA* [DISTANT] (HEMIPTERA: CICADELLIDAE) USING PARTIAL DNA SEQUENCE OF CYTOCHROME OXIDASE SUBUNIT I (COI) GENE

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ABSTRACT

The leafhopper Superfamily Membracoidea (Insecta: Hemiptera) is one of the most dominant groups of phytophagous insects. It comprises a total of 15,000 species worldwide and is very common in rice fields. *Cofana spectra* (Distant) is a pest of paddy, notably in upland rice fields, which suck sap from the leaves and results drying of leaf tips leading the leaf flip orange and curl. The species has been attained a major pest status in several districts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala of which very little work is available so far. Here we analyse the partial DNA sequence of cytochrome oxidase subunit I (COI) gene of *Cofana spectra* and its molecular phylogenetic status.

KEYWORDS: *Cofana spectra*, Cytochrome Oxidase Subunit I (COI) Gene, Molecular Phylogeny, Pest