**SYNERGISTIC EFFECTS OF NITROGEN POLLUTION AND INCREASED SOLAR RADIATION ON EPIPHYTIC LYCHENS**

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In the last decades, the scientific community has exploited the natural indicator potential of classifying lichens into different functional groups depending on their ecological and physiological response to different environmental stressors. Despite their extensive use as ecological indicators of single global change drivers, knowledge on lichen response to the synergistic effect of multiple environmental factors is extremely scarce, although vital to get a comprehensive understanding of the effects of global change. The aim of this research was to assess combined effect of both increased solar exposure and increased nitrogen (N) deposition on the physiological response of six epiphytic lichen species belonging to various functional groups in terms of solar radiation and N tolerance. We exposed five thalli of each lichen species to the combined effects of two nitrogen (N) doses and direct sunlight involving both high temperatures and UV radiation for 58 days. Irrespective of their functional group, all species showed a homogenous response to N with cumulative, detrimental effects and an inability to recover following sunlight, UV exposure. Moreover, solar radiation made a tolerant species more prone to N pollution’s effects. Our results draw attention to the consequences that canopy defoliation and tree death, due to global change when combined with other environmental drivers, can have on the protection of the ecosystems. Funding: This research was funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 793965.