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Late Cretaceous echinoids from Northern Flanks of Alborz Mountain, Iran

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Abstract: This study of the echinoid faunas of the north part of Iran is part of a long-term research project aimed at investigating the paleontology and biostratigraphy of the marine Cretaceous of the Alborz Mountains. The Maastrichtian echinoids faunas are described with foraminifer association from Alborz Mountain. These deposits range from shallow shelf carbonates to upper continental slope clastics. The genus *Echinocorys* shows a clear preference for deeper water pelagic carbonates facies (chalk) where it commonly dominates Cretaceous echinoid assemblages. *Echinoids*, though common in recent environments, has rarely been analyzed systematically or used as a palaeobiological tool. Virtually nothing is known about the late Cretaceous palaeoecology of echinoids in tropical carbonate shelf environments of Iran. The echinoid fauna from Alborz Mountains described here provides the first such opportunity to assess echinoid distribution and faunal associations quantitatively.

Keyword: Echinoids; *Echinocorys*; Paleoecology; late Cretaceous; Alborz Mountains; Iran