

CCD photometry of the distant young open cluster NGC 7510

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SUMMARY

CCD observations in B , V and I passbands have been used to generate deep V , $(B-V)$ and V , $(V-I)$ colour–magnitude diagrams for the open cluster NGC 7510. The sample consists of 592 stars reaching down to $V=21$ mag. There appears to be non-uniform extinction over the face of the cluster with the value of colour excess, $E(B-V)$, ranging from 1.0 to 1.3 mag. The law of interstellar extinction in the direction of the cluster is found to be normal. A broad main sequence is clearly visible in both colour–magnitude diagrams. From the bluest part of the colour–magnitude diagrams, the true distance modulus to the cluster has been estimated as 12.5 ± 0.3 mag and an upper limit of 10 Myr has been assigned for the cluster age.

1 INTRODUCTION

The colour–magnitude (CM) and colour–colour (CC) diagrams of a star cluster are valuable tools for obtaining fundamental information about the cluster, such as its distance and age; for studying interstellar extinction in the direction of the cluster and for the study of stellar evolution. The distances, ages and stellar contents of young open star clusters give information on the star formation histories, structure and evolution of the galaxy. For such work, accurate observations up to $V \sim 21$ mag (6–7 magnitudes fainter than the turn-off point) are needed and they are lacking for most of the distant young open star clusters. As the introduction of modern detectors like charge-coupled devices (CCDs) make precise photometric observations possible up to that brightness with 2-m size telescopes, we observed five such clusters in 1988 July on the Isaac Newton telescope (INT) at La Palma. In the present work, observations have been presented for one of them, namely NGC 7510.

The northern galactic open cluster NGC 7510 = C2309 + 603 ($l = 110^\circ 96$, $b = -0^\circ 05$) is a member of a star complex in Cassiopeia, where star formation is still in progress (Lozinskaya, Sitnik & Lomovskii 1986). According to Lyngå (1987), it has been classified as a nebulous cluster of Trumpler class II3r. Because of its relatively large distance, the cluster has not been observed extensively. The first photometric study of the cluster was carried out by Becker, Müller & Steinlin (1955) in the RGU system. They observed 126 stars brighter than $G \sim 16.8$ mag and found only 50 of them to be possible cluster members. They derived $E(G-R) = 1.06$ mag and $E(U-G) = 0.91$ mag for the cluster reddening and 2.5 kpc as a distance to the cluster. Later on, based on UBV photoelectric and photographic photometry

of 91 stars with a limiting magnitude $V \sim 16.1$ mag, Hoag *et al.* (1961) presented V , $(B-V)$ CM and $(U-B)$, $(B-V)$ CC diagrams for the cluster. Recently, Fenkart & Schröder (1985) carried out UBV photographic observations of 314 stars in the cluster region. They calibrated the observations using photoelectric data given by Hoag *et al.* (1961). They also found only 50 stars as probable cluster members. The cluster parameters derived by them are: turn-off colour, $(B-V)_0 = -0.32$ mag, earliest spectral type = O6, extinction to the cluster, $E(B-V) = 1.16$ mag, and distance to the cluster, $d = 3.14$ kpc; while in the Lyngå's (1987) catalogue, they are: $(B-V)_0 = -0.26$ mag, earliest spectral type = O9–B2, variable extinction with a mean value of $E(B-V) = 1.06$ mag, log of age = 7.0 and $d = 3.1$ kpc. The observations in lines [O II], [N II] and [S II] as well as the blue and red Palomar maps indicate that two dust shells are likely to be associated with NGC 7510 (Lozinskaya *et al.* 1986).

In this paper we describe the new BVI CCD photometric observations of the stars in the field of NGC 7510. These together with existing observations have been used to study the interstellar extinction across the cluster region and to estimate membership, distance and age of the cluster.

2 OBSERVATIONS

The observations were carried out in the B , V and I photometric bands, using an RCA SID 501 thinned back illuminated CCD detector at the $f/3.29$ prime focus of the 2.3-m INT at La Palma. The cluster regions were imaged only on the night of 1988 July 23–24 but observations for photoelectric standards, bias, dark- and flat-fields along with other program clusters were taken between 1988 July 21 and 23. At the prime focus, a pixel of the 320×512 size CCD corresponds to 0.74 arcsec and the entire chip covers a

field of $\sim 4.0 \times 6.3$ arcmin² on the sky. The read-out noise for the system was ~ 60 electrons pixel⁻¹, while the electrons per ADU (analogue to digital unit) was ~ 4 . The nights were of good photometric quality with best and worst seeing ~ 1.2 and 2.0 arcsec, respectively. On the observing nights, the values of atmospheric extinction coefficient in the V passband determined by the Carlsberg Automatic meridian circle were between 0.10 and 0.11 mag per unit air mass with almost negligible (~ -0.003 mag) hourly rate of change of extinction. These along with mean $(B-V)$ atmospheric extinction coefficients for the site were used in determining the colour equations for the CCD system as well as zero-points for the cluster frames in the next section.

Flat-field exposures ranging from 1 to 10 s in each filter were made of the twilight sky. Altogether 11 , 19 and 15 flat-field frames were taken in the passbands B , V and I , respectively. The two overlapping regions called north and south (see Plate 1) were imaged for the construction of cluster diagrams. The regions were chosen in such a way that they should cover the entire central region of the cluster, thus maximizing the number of measurable cluster members and minimizing the proportion of field stars included in the cluster diagrams. Other observing details of the cluster regions are given in Table 1. Nine Landolt (1983) standards were observed for calibration purposes. They cover a range of 10 to 12.75 mag in V and -0.19 to 1.41 mag in $(V-I)$.

3 REDUCTIONS

The data were reduced mainly at the Anglo-Australian Observatory, Epping and partly at the Astronomische Institute der Universität Bonn, Bonn using a VAX 11/780 and many μ VAX computers. Initial processing of the data frames was done in the usual manner using the FIGARO data reduction package. The uniformity of the flat-fields is better than a few per cent in all filters. The averaged flat-fields were used in flat-fielding the data CCD frames.

Although the cluster fields are not exceptionally crowded, the magnitude estimation of a star on each of the frames has been done using the DAOPHOT profile-fitting software (Stetson 1987) so that it can be determined reliably to faint levels. The stellar point spread function (PSF) used by the DAOPHOT was evaluated from the sum of several uncontaminated stars present on each frame.

Further data reductions were done using the table handling facilities of STARMAN (Penny 1988). All the data

frames in a colour were combined by calculating the mean frame-to-frame magnitude difference for all well-measured stars which have $\sim 5-8$ mag range in brightness. In averaging the CCD magnitudes, measures which converged with more than 50 iterations or differing from the mean for a given star by 0.1 mag were rejected. Altogether, less than 15 per cent of the measurements were rejected.

By performing synthetic aperture photometry on the photoelectric standards, the following colour equations were derived for the present CCD system:

$$\Delta I = \Delta i_{\text{CCD}} + 0.012(\pm 0.007)(V-I)$$

$$\Delta V = \Delta v_{\text{CCD}} - 0.006(\pm 0.006)(V-I)$$

$$\Delta B = \Delta b_{\text{CCD}} + 0.109(\pm 0.008)(B-V),$$

where B , V and I are the standard mag taken from Landolt (1983) and b , v and i with the subscript 'CCD' are the aperture mag. In converting the CCD instrumental magnitude of a star into its standard V magnitude, we applied colour corrections in terms of $(V-I)$ instead of $(B-V)$ because most of the faint stars were not detected in B . For some stars, we have measurements in B and V but not in I . The colour correction for them has been applied in terms of $(B-V)$ using the following relation:

$$\Delta V = \Delta v_{\text{CCD}} - 0.009(\pm 0.005)(B-V).$$

Zero-points for the B , V and I cluster frames were determined with respect to photoelectric observations of Landolt (1983) by simply taking into account the differences in exposure times, atmospheric extinction coefficients and the difference between aperture and PSF magnitudes. The zero-points determined in this way, have an uncertainty of ~ 0.02 mag in B , V and I . The internal errors estimated from the scatter in the individual measures on different frames are listed in Table 2 as a function of brightness.

The X and Y pixel coordinates as well as V , $(B-V)$ and $(V-I)$ magnitudes of stars observed in NGC 7510 are listed in Table 3, along with the number of observations in each filter. Stars observed by Hoag *et al.* (1961) and Fenkart & Schröder (1985) have also been identified. Only stars with at least two measures in each filter are included in Table 3 and used in the subsequent analysis. Stars brighter than 10.5 mag on cluster CCD frames could not be measured, as they are saturated even on the short exposure frames. Stars in the magnitude range of $10.5-14.0$ are generally saturated on deep exposure frames. Stars located in the overlapping area of the two cluster regions have generally been measured on $8-10$ frames in each passband.

Table 1. Details of cluster observations. All the frames were taken on the night 1988 July 23–24.

Filter	North region		South region	
	Exposure time in seconds	No. of frames	Exposure time in seconds	No. of frames
B	50	4	50	4
			2	2
V	40	5	40	5
			1	2
I	60	3	30	4
	30	1	1	2

Table 2. Internal photometric errors as a function of brightness. The standard deviation (σ) is per observation in magnitudes.

Magnitude range	σ_B	σ_V	σ_I
≤ 12.0	0.005	0.009	0.012
12.0 - 14.0	0.008	0.009	0.017
14.0 - 16.0	0.010	0.014	0.019
16.0 - 17.0	0.015	0.022	0.028
17.0 - 18.0	0.021	0.041	0.032
18.0 - 19.0	0.036	0.050	0.047
19.0 - 20.0	0.053	0.053	0.055
20.0 - 21.0	0.070	0.060	0.060

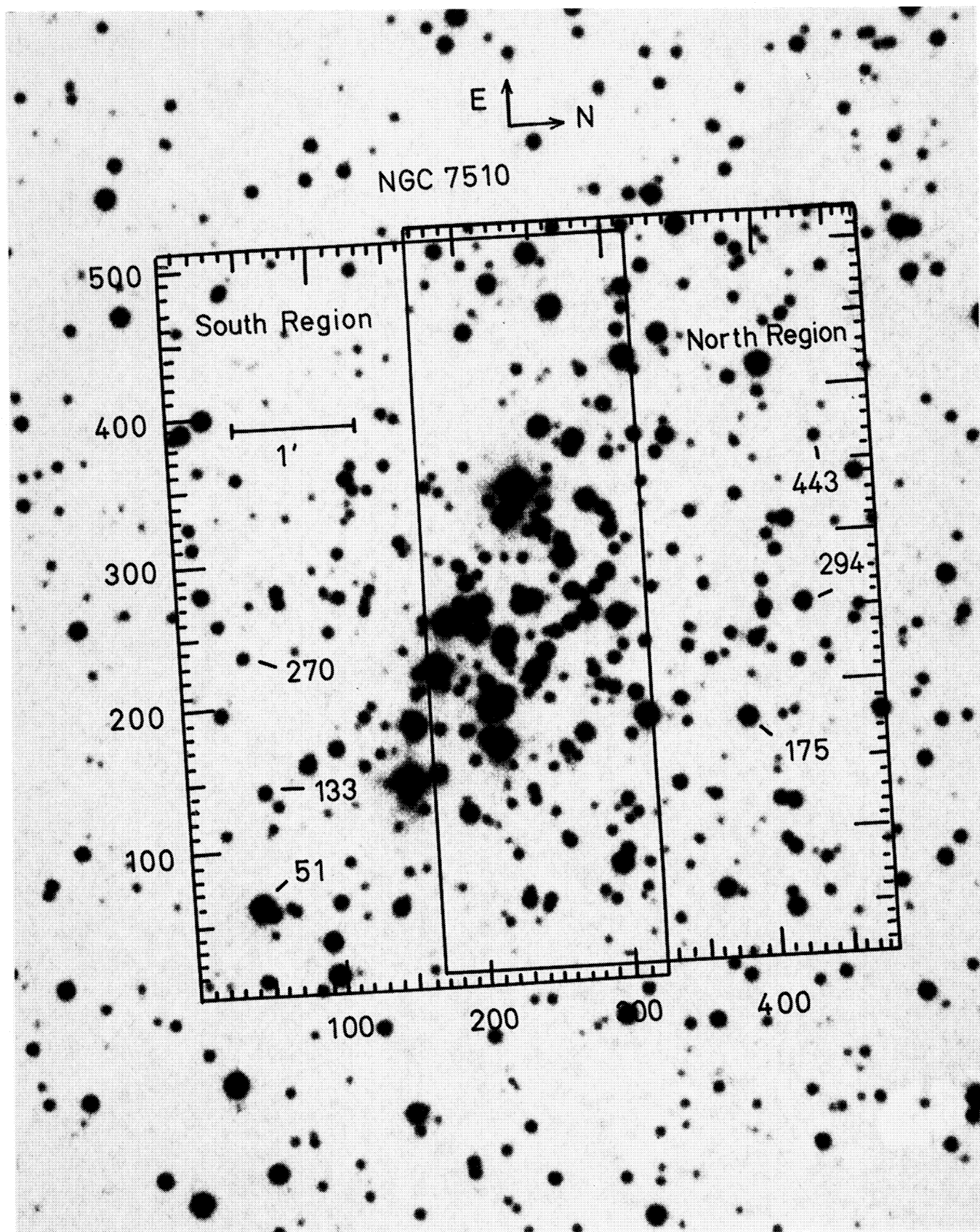


Plate 1. Identification map for the two overlapping imaged cluster regions. The map is produced from the *B* glass plate of Palomar Observatory Sky Survey and has a scale of ~ 2.55 arcsec mm^{-1} . North is to the right side and east is towards the top. The size of a CCD frame is $\sim 4.0 \times 6.3$ arcmin² and the coordinates are in pixel units.

To compare the present photometry with that of Hoag *et al.* (1961) and Fenkart & Schröder (1985), the differences in the sense CCD minus the other data are plotted in Fig. 1 and the statistical results are listed in Table 4. These show that:

(i) The BV photoelectric data of Hoag *et al.* (1961) are in good agreement with the CCD data.

(ii) For stars located in uncrowded regions, the BV photographic data of Hoag *et al.* (1961) and Fenkart & Schröder (1985) show no systematic difference with the CCD data. The statistical results for photographic data are based on such stars, by excluding a few points discrepant by more than 3.5σ .

(iii) In crowded regions, photographic measures are generally brighter than the CCD measures. The errors are more likely to lie in the photographic observations given the superior performance of the CCD as a photometer and the techniques used in data reduction.

4 INTERSTELLAR EXTINCTION IN THE DIRECTION OF CLUSTER

In order to estimate interstellar extinction to the cluster, we used the $(U-B)$ versus $(B-V)$ diagram constructed from the data given by Hoag *et al.* (1961) and Fenkart & Schröder (1985). By fitting the intrinsic zero-age main sequence (ZAMS) given by Schmidt-Kaler (1982) to the cluster main sequence (MS), we find that for MS stars, the value of $E(B-V)$ varies from 1.0 to 1.3 mag. The dispersion in the $E(B-V)$ values cannot be due only to errors in the photographic data because the more precise photoelectric data also show a similar amount of scatter. This indicates that non-uniform interstellar extinction is present across the cluster region and matter present between the cluster and

Earth causes a minimum extinction of $E(B-V)=1.0$ mag. The presence of non-uniform extinction in the cluster region has also been indicated by Lyngå (1987) without quantifying it. Non-uniform extinction could be due to the two dust shells associated with NGC 7510 (Lozinskaya *et al.* 1986).

The present data in combination with the UBV photoelectric data of Hoag *et al.* (1961) have been used to determine colour excesses for early type probable cluster members listed in Table 5. The $(B-V)_0$, $E(B-V)$ and $E(U-B)$ values have been estimated using either the spectral type (available only for stars 3, 5 and 7 from Mermilliod 1986) or the UBV photometric Q method (*cf.* Johnson & Morgan 1953; Sagar & Joshi 1979) and the calibrations given by Schmidt-Kaler (1982). The $E(V-I)$ value has been estimated using Walker's (1985) calibration between $(B-V)_0$ and $(V-I)_0$, and the present $(V-I)$ measurements. For a normal interstellar extinction law, the ratio $E(U-B)/E(B-V)=0.72$ (Schmidt-Kaler 1982) and $E(V-I)/E(B-V)=1.25$ (Dean, Warren & Cousins 1978). The mean values of $E(U-B)/E(B-V)$ and $E(V-I)/E(B-V)$ (see Table

Table 4. Statistical results of the photometric comparison. The difference is always in the sense present minus comparison data. The mean and standard deviation (σ) are based on N stars. In comparison with photographic data, only stars located in uncrowded regions have been used. A few points discrepant by more than 3.5σ have been excluded from the analysis.

Comparison data	Difference in V			Difference in (B-V)		
	Mean	σ	N	Mean	σ	N
Hoag <i>et al.</i> (1961) photoelectric	0.014	0.040	9	-0.012	0.047	9
Hoag <i>et al.</i> (1961) photographic	0.036	0.059	40	-0.038	0.064	38
Fenkart & Schröder (1985)	0.043	0.115	55	-0.010	0.094	61

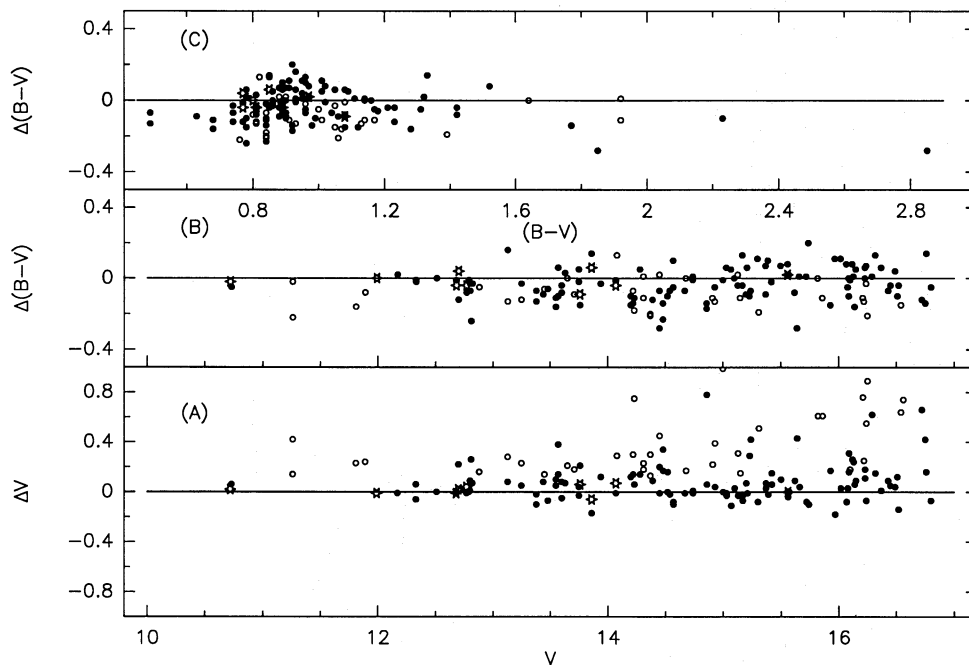


Figure 1. A comparison of the present photometry with data given by Hoag *et al.* (1961) and Fenkart & Schröder (1985). The differences (Δ) are in the sense present minus others' data, plotted against the CCD photometry. Asterisks denote Hoag *et al.*'s (1961) photoelectric data while open and filled circles represent photographic data in crowded and uncrowded regions respectively.

5) are in good agreement with the normal values. Consequently, we assume that the law of interstellar extinction in the direction of the cluster is normal.

5 COLOUR-MAGNITUDE DIAGRAMS AND FIELD STAR CONTAMINATION

We have plotted $V, (B-V)$ and $V, (V-I)$ CM diagrams for all the measured stars in Fig. 2(a) and (b), respectively. Stars observed photoelectrically by Hoag *et al.* (1961) but not present in our sample have also been plotted in Fig. 2(a). It is difficult to separate field stars from the cluster members only on the basis of their closeness to the main populated area of the CM diagrams because field stars at cluster distance and reddening will also occupy this area. However, the possibility of cluster membership is small for the stars located well away from the MS, shown by open circles in Fig. 2. To know

Table 5. Intrinsic $(B-V)_0$, $E(B-V)$ and colour excess ratios for probable cluster members with photoelectric $(U-B)$ observations. Star numbers are from the photoelectric list of Hoag *et al.* (1961).

Star	$(B-V)_0$	$E(B-V)$	$E(U-B)/E(B-V)$	$E(V-I)/E(B-V)$
3	-0.25	1.09	0.66	-
5	-0.28	1.15	0.68	1.31
7	-0.21	1.01	0.46	1.33
10	-0.29	1.06	0.75	1.20
11	-0.31	1.08	0.71	1.11
12	-0.20	1.01	0.73	1.17
16	-0.21	1.29	0.73	1.40
17	-0.27	1.18	0.74	-
18	-0.24	1.09	0.72	1.22
19	-0.22	1.11	0.72	1.40
20	-0.23	1.11	0.71	-
21	-0.19	1.30	0.73	-
22	-0.14	1.07	0.70	-
23	-0.20	1.17	0.74	1.22
Mean $\pm \sigma$	-0.23 ± 0.05	1.12 ± 0.09	0.72 ± 0.03	1.26 ± 0.10

the actual number of cluster members from the remaining stars, their precise proper motion and/or radial velocity measurements are required. However, it is unlikely that all the stars fainter than $V \sim 16$ mag are field stars as indicated by Fenkart & Schröder (1985) on the basis of $V, (U-B)$ diagram of the cluster region.

A broad but well-defined cluster MS is clearly visible in the magnitude range of $13 \leq V \leq 19$. The effects of stellar evolution are not visible in the CM diagrams. To quantify the intrinsic width of observed MS, we have carried out the following simple analysis. The stars located between the eye defined blue and red envelopes of the MS have been binned in V . The colour difference (Δ) between the envelopes along with the dispersion σ_0 as a function of V magnitude has been given in Table 6. Although, the total photometric error present in our measurements is at least a combination of (a) the measuring error in each frame (internal error), (b) the intrinsic error involved in the standard stars used for calibration and (c) the uncertainties in the transformations to the standard system; the scatter, σ_E , expected in $(B-V)$ and $(V-I)$ at any given V , will arise purely from (a). The value of such scatter has been estimated from Table 2 and the results are listed in Table 6. Assuming Gaussian distributions for σ_0 and σ_E , the intrinsic widths σ_1 of the MS in $(B-V)$ and $(V-I)$, are estimated as $\sigma_1^2 = \sigma_0^2 - \sigma_E^2$. The intrinsic width, σ_1 in $(V-I)$ is generally greater than in $(B-V)$. Most probably, presence of variable interstellar extinction across the cluster region is responsible for this because $E(V-I) = 1.25 E(B-V)$. As a statistically significant difference exists between σ_0 and σ_E for $V \leq 18$ mag, the estimates of σ_1 should be considered reliable down to this limit.

The above analysis clearly indicates the presence of intrinsic dispersion in the observed MS. In addition to the presence of variable extinction across the cluster region, other main sources responsible for such dispersion can be the presence of field stars, binaries, variables and peculiars in the sample. It is not possible to assess from our observations

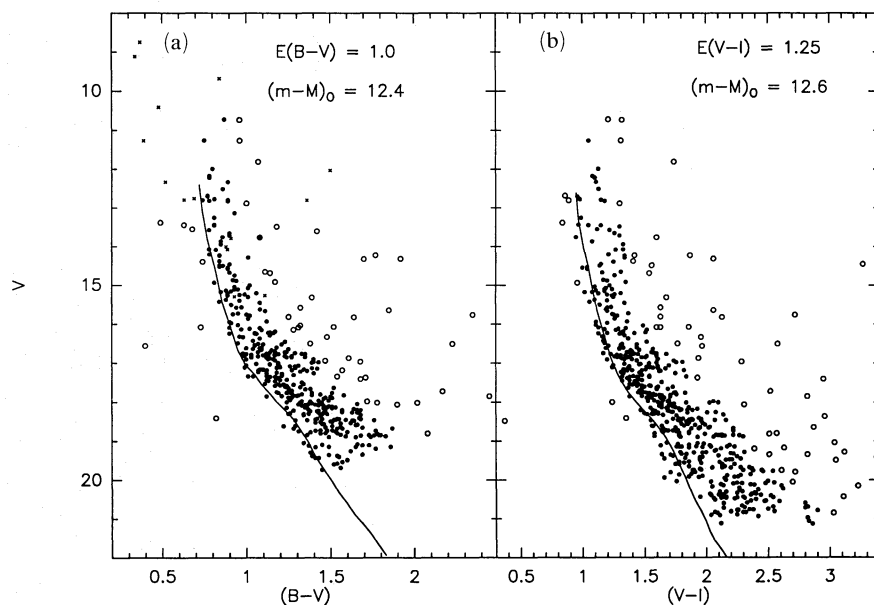


Figure 2. (a) $V, (B-V)$ and (b) $V, (V-I)$ diagrams for all the measured stars in NGC 7510. Crosses denote the stars observed photoelectrically but not present in our sample. The proposed non-members are shown as open circles.

Table 6. Width of the main sequence of NGC 7510.

Range in V (mag)	$\Delta(B-V)$ (mag)	Dispersion in (B-V)				$\Delta(V-I)$ (mag)	Dispersion in (V-I)			
		N	σ_O (mag)	σ_E (mag)	σ_I (mag)		N	σ_O (mag)	σ_E (mag)	σ_I (mag)
12-14	0.17	21	0.053	0.012	0.052	0.27	23	0.134	0.019	0.133
14-16	0.22	52	0.089	0.017	0.087	0.30	50	0.096	0.024	0.093
16-17	0.31	75	0.122	0.027	0.119	0.36	72	0.130	0.036	0.125
17-18	0.37	95	0.133	0.046	0.125	0.42	99	0.137	0.052	0.127
18-19	0.40	110	0.149	0.062	0.136	0.53	113	0.190	0.069	0.177

the contribution that each of these factors contribute to the spread in colour.

As most of the factors responsible for the colour spread in the MS will redden the stars, we have used the blue envelope of the MS in CM diagrams for the estimation of distance and of age of the cluster. In this process, the colour spread expected from the observational error has been taken into account.

6 DISTANCE TO THE CLUSTER

In order to estimate the distance modulus of NGC 7510, we have used the Pleiades sequence given by Walker (1985). The sequence has been converted into the observational plane using the minimum value of $E(B-V) = 1.0$ mag for a star of $(B-V)_0 = 0.0$ mag and the following relations for the estimation of $E(B-V)$ and $E(V-I)$ (Dean *et al.* 1978)

$$E(B-V) = 1.0[1.0 - 0.08(B-V)_0]$$

and

$$E(V-I) = 1.25 E(B-V)[1.0 + 0.06(B-V)_0 + 0.014 E(B-V)].$$

For the ratio of total to selective absorption we have adopted the expression given by Walker (1987)

$$R = A_v/E(B-V) = 3.06 + 0.25(B-V)_0 + 0.05 E(B-V).$$

After accounting for the colour dispersion expected from the error in the observations, the visual fit of the ZAMS to the bluest envelope of the CM diagrams gives $(m-M)_0 = 12.4$ mag from $V, (B-V)$ and 12.6 mag from $V, (V-I)$. The mean value of $(m-M)_0$ is 12.5 ± 0.3 mag where the error is estimated from the errors in R , $E(B-V)$, and the error in fitting the ZAMS. This yields a distance of 3.16 ± 0.45 kpc to the cluster, about 26 per cent greater than the estimate of Becker *et al.* (1955) but in good agreement with the values given by Fenkart & Schröder (1985) and Lyngå (1987). The present value should be considered the most reliable because it has been derived by fitting the ZAMS in a wide range (~ 7 mag) of the cluster MS.

7 CLUSTER AGE

As stellar evolutionary effects are not clearly visible in the CM diagrams of the cluster, an accurate estimation of the cluster age is not possible. We have estimated the cluster age by fitting the Mermilliod's (1981) empirical isochrones for NGC 6231, NGC 2362 and NGC 884 age groups to the bluest part of the $V, (B-V)$ CM diagram (Fig. 3). The isochrones have been converted from the $M_v, (B-V)_0$ plane to $V, (B-V)$ plane using the relations given in the last section and $(m-M)_0 = 12.5$ mag. The isochrone fitting indicates that

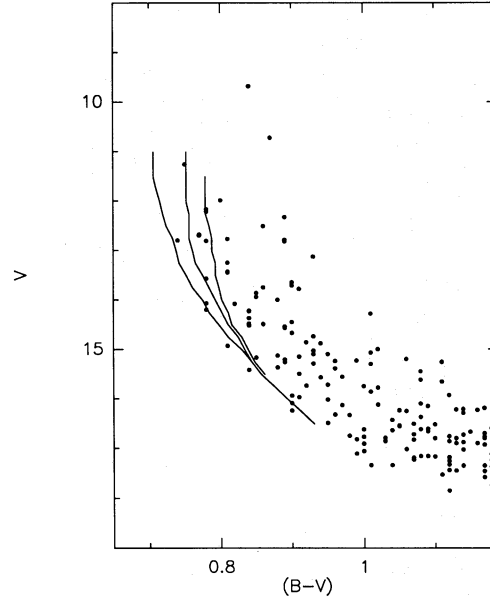


Figure 3. Fitting of the empirical isochrones to the bluest part of the $V, (B-V)$ diagram for the probable cluster member of NGC 7510. The bluest, middle and reddest isochrones are for NGC 6231, NGC 2362 and NGC 884 age group respectively.

the cluster is very young and belongs to the age group of NGC 2362.

If we consider the location of bluest star in the $V, (B-V)$ diagram as a turn-off point of the cluster, then it corresponds to $(B-V)_0 = -0.28$ mag. This also indicates that cluster belongs to NGC 2362 age group (*cf.* table 7 of Mermilliod 1981). We have, therefore, assigned an upper limit of 10 Myr to the cluster age.

8 CONCLUSIONS

The new B, V and I CCD photometry down to $V = 21$ mag is presented for about 600 stars in the open cluster NGC 7510. The present work leads to the following conclusions.

(i) Visual fitting of the ZAMS to the bluest envelope of the CM diagrams over a broad range of V mag (~ 7) gives a distance of 3.16 ± 0.45 kpc to the cluster.

(ii) Mermilliod's (1981) empirical isochrones fitted in the $V, (B-V)$ diagram to probable cluster members indicate that cluster is younger than 10 Myr and belongs to the age group of NGC 2362.

(iii) In absence of kinematical data, it is difficult to separate unambiguously cluster members from the field stars only on the basis of present observations.

(iv) The broad main sequence observed in the CM diagrams cannot be understood in terms of observational errors. In addition to the presence of non-uniform extinction across the cluster, the other most probable sources of MS broadening could be the presence of field stars, binaries, variables and peculiar stars in the sample.

(v) Variable reddening is present across the cluster with a minimum value of $E(B-V) \sim 1.0$ mag.

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