



Exploring the bioactive landscape: peptides and non-peptides from the human microbiota



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The human microbiota, consisting of trillions of bacteria from six main phyla, produces peptide and non-peptide secondary metabolites which have antibacterial properties vital to medicine and biotechnology. These metabolites influence biological processes linked to diseases, yet much remains unknown. This review explores their structures and functions, aiming to spur novel metabolite discovery and advance drug development.

The human body comprises distinct parts, each fulfilling specific functions in the body. The microbiota, which exists in large quantities, is a part of the body that inhabits various regions. Microbes are present in several organs throughout the body, including the gastrointestinal, reproductive, oral, and skin systems. They have distinct populations and play crucial roles in the functioning of these organs and overall biological processes. They affect various physiological systems in the body, including the neurological, endocrine, metabolic, and immune systems^{1,2}. The human microbiota consists of not only bacteria but also yeasts and viruses, which inhabit specific organs. The bacteria mainly belong to the following phyla: Firmicutes, Bacteroidetes, Actinobacteria, Fusobacteria, Proteobacteria, and Verrucomicrobia. These bacteria encompass a diverse array of genera including commensal, mutualistic, or harmful species. Various factors, including nutrition, lifestyle, hormonal changes, heredity, and underlying diseases, can significantly alter the overall balance of the microbiota, leading to the development of numerous diseases¹. The microbiota genome contains 150 times more genetic information than the total human genome, indicating that it is a vital organ in the human body³. Fungi and viruses are essential constituents of the human intestine⁴. The microbiota includes *Candida albicans*, a prevalent fungus passed from mother to infant after parturition. Although typically innocuous, it may contribute to the onset of inflammatory bowel disease. Fungi colonize various body sites, including the gastrointestinal tract, skin, respiratory tract, and genitourinary tract, where they play essential roles in host functions. Similarly, viral communities are crucial to the human microbiome, with plant-derived and large viruses frequently detected in the gut. Numerous studies have established correlations between fungal and viral species and the development of inflammatory and autoimmune disorders^{5–7}.

Recently, the microbiota has been shown to play a significant role in a multitude of diseases. For instance, recent research has established a connection between the microbiota of the gut and neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease. The microbes present in the gut have an effect

on the functioning of the brain⁸. A potential correlation exists between vaginal/endometrial microbiota and reproductive success, underscoring the need of comprehending the genitourinary microbiota in assessing obstetric outcomes. A pilot investigation with 34 women receiving hormonal stimulation revealed a considerable disparity between vaginal and endometrial microbiota⁹. *Dysosmobacter welbionis* is a newly isolated human commensal bacterium that enhances host metabolism and represents a promising candidate for the development of next-generation beneficial bacteria targeting obesity and associated metabolic disorders¹⁰. Furthermore, scientists have coined the phrase “organ-gut-microbiota axis” to characterize the several directions in which the trillions of intestinal bacteria interact with other body organs¹¹. A comprehensive understanding of the microbiota is essential for developing novel therapeutic and preventive strategies, highlighting the importance of advancing current and future microbiome research methodologies.

One element of the microbiota is the production of beneficial metabolites that play crucial roles in numerous disorders. Peptides derived from these bacteria are the main substances that exhibit high antibacterial activity and have been functioning in this capacity for many decades. Additionally, the bacteria release non-peptide metabolites that have significant implications for human health and related illnesses¹². Current genomic and sequencing technologies make it easier to determine how different metabolites are produced, which play a vital role in the domain of human diseases. In genome mining, the major actors are the biosynthetic gene clusters (BGCs) that represent a clear picture of these metabolites. In addition, advanced computational techniques make it easier to predict their presence and role, making the drug discovery field very advanced. For example, sequence homology-based prediction approaches have been widely used in tools such as antiSMASH and PRISM4. Furthermore, machine learning-based approaches, such as those used in RiPPMiner and DeepRiPP, are currently employed for RiPP prediction^{13–15}. In this review, we focus on metabolites isolated from the human microbiota and their biological

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Biosynthetic pathway	Bacteria				Fungi
	Firmicutes	Bacteroidetes	Proteobacteria	Actinomycetes	
Glycerol metabolism	Reuterin (1) Hydroxypropionic acid (2) Trimethylene glycol (3)				
RiPP (Bacteriocin)	Gassericin Nisin Pallidocin Glycocin F			Bifidocin B Glycosin-SVC	
Lipid pathway	Stearic acid (21) Myristic acid (22)	1-GSL-Bf717 (54) Propionic acid (47) 1-deoxydihydroceramide (51) Galactosylceramide (50)	N-(3-oxo-dodecanoyl)-L-homoserine lactone (3-oxo-C12-HSL) (55)	Corynomycolic acid (69) Phthiocerol dimycocerosate (76)	3-methyladipic acid (93)
Isoprenoid pathway	O-methylganoderic acid O (13)	Cholic acid (32) Deoxycholic acid (33)	Deoxycholic acid (66)	Aurachins C, RE (70, 71)	Farnesol (91)
Shikimate pathway	Indole-3-lactic acid (9)	Indole-3-acetic acid (43)	Phenazien (57) Pyocyanin (56)		
PKS	5-butyltetrahydro-2-oxo-3-furancarboxylic acid (30)			Mycolactone polyketides A-D (77-80) Aurachin C, RE (70, 71)	YM-170320 (92)
NRPS	Mutanocyclin (4) Fortimicin A (20)		Tilivalline (58)	Brasilibactin A (90) Nocobactin NA (86) Asterobactin (89) JBIR-16 (87)	Carnosine (96)

Fig. 1 | Clustering of human microbiome metabolites based on related biosynthetic pathways and phylum origins.

applications. Essential information was gathered from various scientific sources including Google Scholar, Web of Science, and PubMed. The structures in the figures were created using ChemDraw 22.2.0 and the remaining figure was created using <https://app.biorender.com/>.

Importance of metabolites from the human microbiota

Over the past decade, many sophisticated techniques such as metabolomics, genomic investigations, and culturomics have enabled the extensive investigation of human microbiota metabolites¹⁶. Antibiotics, which are antimicrobial metabolites, mostly originate from the human microbiota, either directly or indirectly. However, antibiotic use leading to antimicrobial resistance is a significant and urgent problem that must be addressed promptly. Failure to do so could lead to unmanageable and disastrous events in human history^{17,18}. The metabolites produced by the human microbiota are emerging as essential elements in precision medicine, enabling personalized diagnostics and treatment approaches by illustrating how these bacteria influence human health and disease susceptibility. Key aspects of this evolving role include biomarker potential, insights into disease mechanisms, and individualized treatment strategies^{19–21}. The following sections will explore the various microbiota-derived metabolites relevant to precision medicine.

We have extensively documented peptides derived from the human microbiota and their corresponding biological functions²². However, our previous study did not address the nonpeptide portion, which plays a crucial role in human health. Here, we provide a detailed exploration of these aspects. Non-peptide metabolites derived from the human microbiota mostly consist of the sphingolipid pathway, isoprenoid pathway, polyketides, and various other compounds²³. Firmicutes primarily contribute to the synthesis of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), Bacteroidetes are responsible for the degradation of polysaccharides and the generation of SCFAs, and Actinobacteria play a role in the creation of vitamins and SCFAs. In addition, the peptide portion is discussed in terms of its chemistry. On the contrary, dysbiosis is a primary cause of microbiota imbalance, significantly

affecting metabolite production and altering bacterial types and quantities. This results in changes to beneficial metabolites, such as SCFAs, while simultaneously increasing harmful metabolites that contribute to various diseases^{24,25}. However, many species within the human microbiota remain underexplored in terms of metabolite production and isolation. This limited investigation is primarily due to the insufficient study of microbiota-derived metabolites. Most studies focus on non-human microbiota or fungi, with particular emphasis on individual plants. The human microbiota is highly diverse, including many uncultured species and numerous metabolite production pathways remain unexplored. Additionally, it is essential to employ various approaches, such as culture-independent methods, and to advance multi-omics technologies^{26,27}. A simple representation of the metabolites from the human microbiota is shown in Fig. 1.

Different phyla within the human microbiota contributing to non-peptides

As mentioned previously, six principal phyla influence the metabolite makeup of the human microbiota (Table 1). Firmicutes and Bacteroidetes comprise approximately 90% of the human microbiome. Firmicutes have a greater impact on the metabolite profile than any other phyla. The *Firmicutes* genus encompasses multiple genera including *Bacillus*, *Lactobacillus*, *Clostridium*, *Ruminococcus*, *Enterococcus*, and *Staphylococcus*. In contrast, Bacteroidetes include species such as *Bacteroides*, *Odoribacter*, and *Alistipes*, which are the primary inhabitants of the gastrointestinal tract. Proteobacteria, which includes genera such as *Escherichia*, *Salmonella*, *Helicobacter*, and *Klebsiella*, are another important phylum. It contains many opportunistic pathogens and its imbalance is often linked to inflammation and various diseases²⁸. Actinomycetota (formerly Actinobacteria) consists of beneficial genera such as *Bifidobacterium* and *Collinsella*. These microbes contribute to gut health and immunity, and some species are widely utilized as probiotics owing to their health-promoting effects²⁹. A simple representation of the human microbiome and the niches from which they are derived is shown in Fig. 2.

Non-peptide metabolites from Firmicutes and their biological properties

Bacillus and *Lactobacillus* play a vital role in the human body by releasing many bioactive compounds, including lipopeptides, bacteriocins, and most importantly, polyketides. These genera serve as probiotics, resulting in many beneficial effects on the human body^{30,31} (Table 2). *Lactobacilli* occupy the digestive system, oral cavity, and reproductive organs and contribute to metabolite profiles in the form of phenolic acids, carboxylic acids, hydrogen peroxide, and many others, displaying diverse ranges of biological activities^{32,33}. *Lactobacillus reuteri* is a naturally occurring bacterium in the human gastrointestinal tract. It has numerous advantageous effects including the production of beneficial metabolites, combating harmful bacteria, maintaining a healthy balance of bacteria, enhancing the immune system, and functioning as a probiotic microorganism³³. Reuterin (1), a growth inhibitor has been isolated from *L. reuteri* 1063 together with β -hydroxypropionic acid (2) and trimethylene glycol (3)³⁴. The structures of the three compounds are shown in Fig. 3. Reuterin is a low-molecular-

weight water-soluble molecule that contains both aldehyde and hydroxyl functional groups. It exhibits a wide range of antimicrobial effects and, in particular, does not affect normal bacteria present in the human microbiota, while targeting the harmful bacteria³⁵. The effects of reuterin, also known as 3-hydroxypropionaldehyde, on *Escherichia coli* cells expressing a gene responsive to oxidative stress, were investigated. To demonstrate its involvement in oxidative stress, *E. coli* was genetically altered to modify OxyR. In addition, the antibacterial effect of reuterin was inhibited by adding cysteine to the growth media of *E. coli* and *Clostridium difficile*. The presence of *E. coli* prompts the development or release of reuterin by *L. reuteri*, suggesting a detrimental effect on numerous cellular targets³⁶. The synergistic activity of reuterin against many foodborne pathogenic bacteria, including nisin, lactacin 481, and enterocin AS-48, results in improved antibacterial activity³⁷.

L. reuteri also results in the formation of another bioactive non-peptide metabolite called reutericyclin. The inhibitory activity of this compound has been observed across a wide range of bacteria, including the following *Lactobacillus* species: *Bacillus subtilis*, *B. cereus*, *Enterococcus faecalis*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Listeria innocua*. Additionally, it is effective against a lipopolysaccharide-mutant strain of *E. coli*. The bactericidal activity of this compound has also been shown to be effective against *S. aureus*, *B. subtilis*, and *L. sanfranciscensis*³⁸. This compound has also been reported in another Firmicute called *Streptococcus mutans*, which was able to produce mutanocyclin (4) and reutericyclins A–C (5–7), which display many biological functions, including biofilm inhibition, and acts on *Limosilactobacillus fermentum*³⁹. *S. mutans* is a bacteria inherently found in the human oral microbiome and is a primary contributor to dental caries and cavities⁴⁰. Mutanocyclin exhibits potent antifungal activity against *Candida albicans*. In these fungi, it modulates the activity of the PKA catabolic subunit Tpk2 and its binding partner Sfl1, resulting in increased resistance and sensitivity. The mutanocyclin response is influenced by three GPI-anchored proteins and filamentous regulators, indicating that transcriptional regulation and cell wall composition play roles in inhibiting filamentous growth. Both in vivo and in vitro experiments have confirmed the fungicidal properties of mutanocyclin⁴¹. Recently, a *Lactobacillus* genus was studied against the fungus *C. albicans*, in which the bioassay-guided isolation from

Table 1 | Different phyla within the human microbiota

Phylum	Major Genera	Notes
Firmicutes	<i>Bacillus</i> <i>Lactobacillus</i> <i>Clostridium</i> <i>Ruminococcus</i> <i>Enterococcus</i> <i>Staphylococcus</i>	- comprise 90% of the human microbiome with Bacteroidetes - the greatest impact on the metabolite profile
Bacteroidetes	<i>Bacteroides</i> <i>Odoribacter</i> <i>Alistipes</i>	- primary inhabitants of the gastrointestinal tract
Proteobacteria	<i>Escherichia</i> <i>Salmonella</i> <i>Helicobacter</i> <i>Klebsiella</i>	- includes many opportunistic pathogens - inflammation or disease caused by their imbalance
Actinomycetota	<i>Bifidobacterium</i> <i>Collinsella</i>	- contributes to gut health and immunity - some are probiotics

Fig. 2 | Different microorganisms derived from different niches in the human body (elements created using Servier Medical Art, licensed under CC BY 4.0).

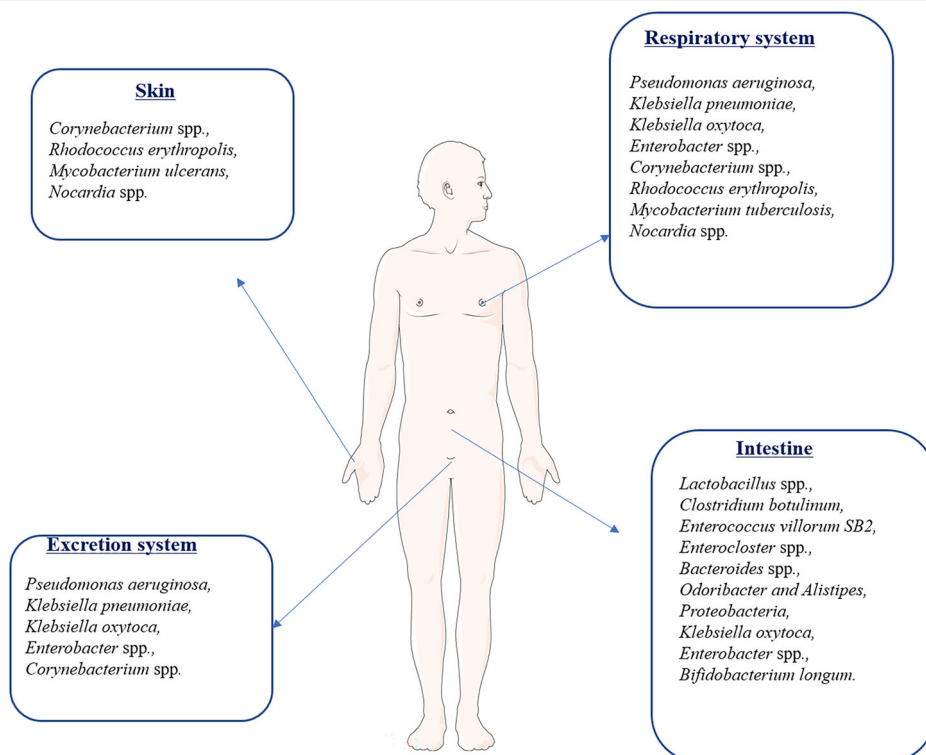
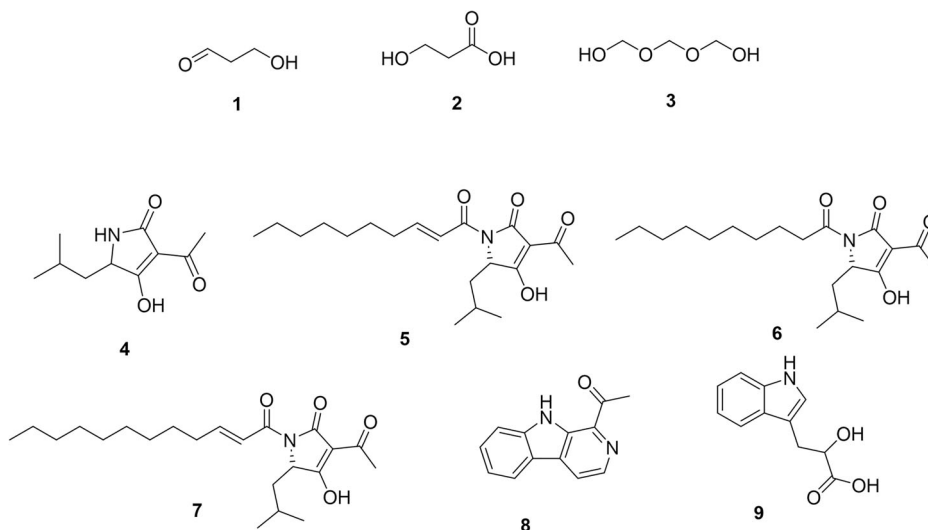


Table 2 | Non-peptidyl metabolites from Firmicutes

Organism	Metabolites	Activity	Ref.
<i>Lactobacillus reuteri</i>	reuterin (1), β-hydroxypropionic acid (2), trimethylene glycol (3)	- wide range of antimicrobial effects	34
	reutericyclins A–C (5–7), mutanocyclin (4)	- broad-spectrum antibacterial; biofilm inhibition; antifungal activity against <i>Candida albicans</i>	39
<i>Lactobacillus genus</i>	1-acetyl-β-carboline (8)	- fungicidal activity against <i>Candida albicans</i>	42
<i>Lactobacillus gallinarum</i>	indole-3-lactic acid (9)	- reduction of intestinal tumor growth in mice models	43
<i>Clostridium botulinum</i> AIP981.10	clostridiolysin S, botulinolysin, phospholipase C, C3 exoenzyme	- role in inflammation, symbiosis, and association with gastrointestinal disorders	46,47
<i>Enterococcus villorum</i> SB2	hordatine B (10), quercetin 3-O-manoglucoside (11), hydroxycitrinaxanthin (12), O-methylganoderic acid O (13), thalicessine (14), austinol (15), valdiate (16)	- antimicrobial	51
	5-hydroxykynurenamine (17), (2S,4R)-4-(9H-pyrido[3,4-b]indol-1-yl)-1,2,4-butanetriol (18)	- indole derivatives	
	indoleacrylic acid (19), fortimicin A (20), L-theanine (27), glycerol-1-propanoate (29)	- antimicrobial and gut health enhancement activities	
	stearic acid (21), myristic acid (22), p-mentha-1,3,5,8-tetraene (23), 6-hydroxypseudoxynicotine (24), D/L-glycerol-1-phosphate (25), 4-β-D-glucan (26), 5-butyltetrahydro-2-oxo-3-furancarboxylic acid (30)	- fatty acids with potential bioactivities	
<i>Enterocloster</i> spp.	urolithin G (31)	- antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties	53

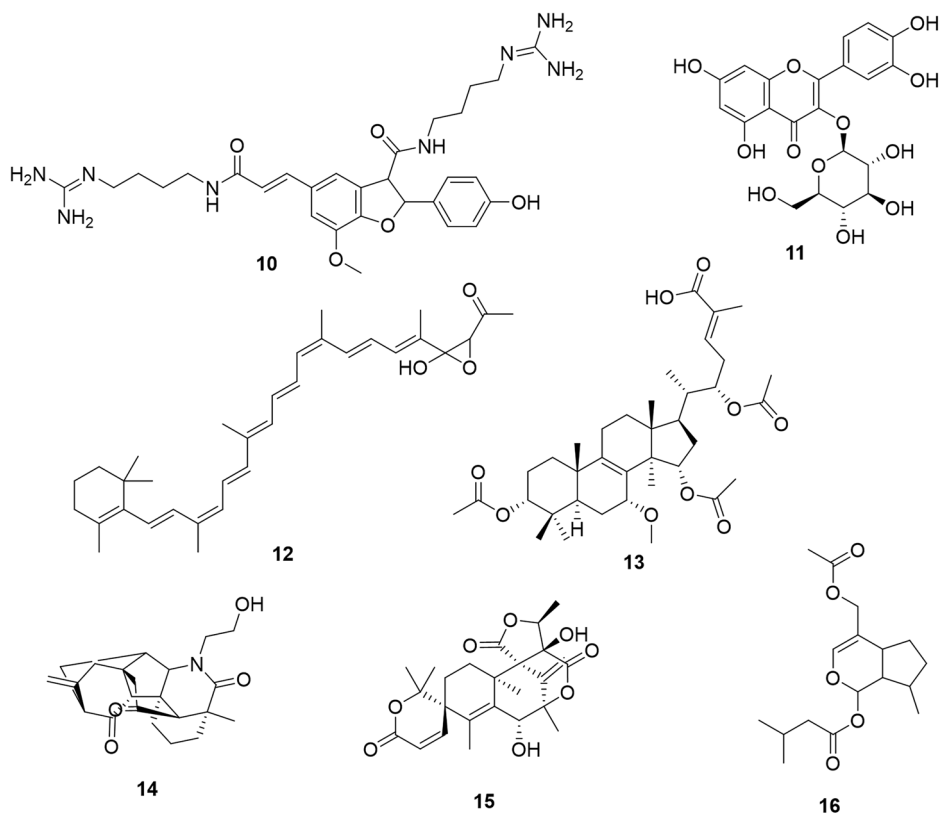
Fig. 3 | Structures of reuterin (1), β-hydroxypropionic acid (2), trimethylene glycol (3), mutanocyclin (4), reutericyclins A–C (5–7), 1-acetyl-β-carboline (8), and indole-3-lactic acid (9).

Lactobacillus resulted in 1-acetyl-β-carboline (8)⁴². Moreover, indole-3-lactic acid (9) has also been detected in *L. gallinarum*. This compound was used to decrease the quantity and growth of intestinal tumors in male and female mouse models of intestinal tumorigenesis in comparison with *E. coli* MG1655 and phosphate-buffered saline⁴³. The structures of compounds (4–9) are shown in Fig. 3.

Clostridium is a well-known symbiotic bacterium that inhabits the gastrointestinal tract. It also plays a vital role in inflammation and allergies. Many disorders, such as botulism and tetanus, are caused by bacteria within this genus and are involved in diarrhea^{44,45}. Typically, *Clostridia* produce toxins. Bouvet et al. conducted a case study on *Clostridium*, specifically

focusing on the isolation of *Clostridium botulinum* AIP981.10 from a blood culture collected from a patient with a fatal infection. Remarkably, they observed that this strain could not generate fatal toxins. In addition to clostridiolysin S, it contains genes for botulinolysin, phospholipase C, and the C3 exoenzyme. Its genomic profile indicates a phylogenetic association between AIP981.10 and strains belonging to *Clostridium botulinum* group III. Furthermore, the genomic sequences of botulinolysin and phospholipase C exhibited notable similarity to those of *C. botulinum* C and D. However, they displayed a comparatively lower degree of homology with the genes of *C. novyi* and *C. haemolyticum*^{46,47}. Another genus in the gastrointestinal tract that belongs to the lactic acid bacteria family is

Fig. 4 | Structures of hordatine B (**10**), quercetin 3-O-manoglucoside (**11**), 7',8'-dihydro-8'-hydroxycitrinaxanthin (**12**), O-methylganoderic acid O (**13**), thalicsessine (**14**), austinol (**15**), and valdiate (**16**).



Enterococci^{48,49}. Enterococci are a natural component of the human microbiota, often found in the lower gastrointestinal tract, mouth cavity, and vaginal tract. They are opportunistic pathogens capable of causing infections in individuals who are immunocompromised or have significant underlying health conditions⁵⁰. *Enterococcus villorum* SB2 isolated from the female reproductive system exhibited the occurrence of many metabolites including flavonoids (hordatine B (**10**), quercetin 3-O-manoglucoside (**11**)), terpenoids (7',8'-dihydro-8'-hydroxycitrinaxanthin (**12**), O-methylganoderic acid O (**13**), thalicsessine (**14**), urolithin G (**15**), and valdiate (**16**)), indole derivatives produced by tryptophan metabolism (5-hydroxykynurenamine (**17**), 2S,4R-4-(9H-pyrido[3,4-b]indol-1-yl)-1,2,4-butanetriol (**18**), and indoleacrylic acid (**19**)), antimicrobial compounds (fortimicin A (**20**)), fatty acids (stearic acid (**21**) and myristic acid (**22**)), p-mentha-1,3,5,8-tetraene (**23**), 6 hydroxypseudooxynicotine (**24**), DL-glycerol 1-phosphate (**25**), and 4-beta-D-glucan (**26**). Furthermore, many other metabolites have been reported, such as analogs of an amino acid to glutamate (L-theanine (**27**)), galactose, lactate, ketohexose deoxy sugar (L-fucose (**28**)), acetylated glycerols (glycerol-1-propanoate (**29**)), and gutyrolactones (5-butyltetrahydro-2-oxo-3-furancarboxylic acid (**30**))⁵¹. Bhagwat et al. examined 13 strains of Enterococci derived from humans that produce significant enzymes such as amylase, protease, lipase, bile salt hydrolase, conjugated linoleic acid, and lactic acid. These findings suggest that starter cultures possess qualities that may be beneficial to the food and dairy industries. Biogenic amines such as arginine and tryptamine were also synthesized by these strains⁵².

In addition, a new urolithin derived from urolithin D was discovered and thoroughly analyzed. Urolithin G (3,4,8-trihydroxy urolithin) (**31**), derived from urolithin D by in vitro incubation with various human gut Enterocloster species, was detected in the feces of 12% of overweight participants following the use of a pomegranate extract rich in ellagitannins. Urolithin G is distinguished by the presence of a catechol group in ring A and a solitary hydroxyl group in ring B, a distinctive characteristic that is absent in both human and animal samples⁵³. The structures of (**10**–**31**) are shown in Figs. 4 and 5.

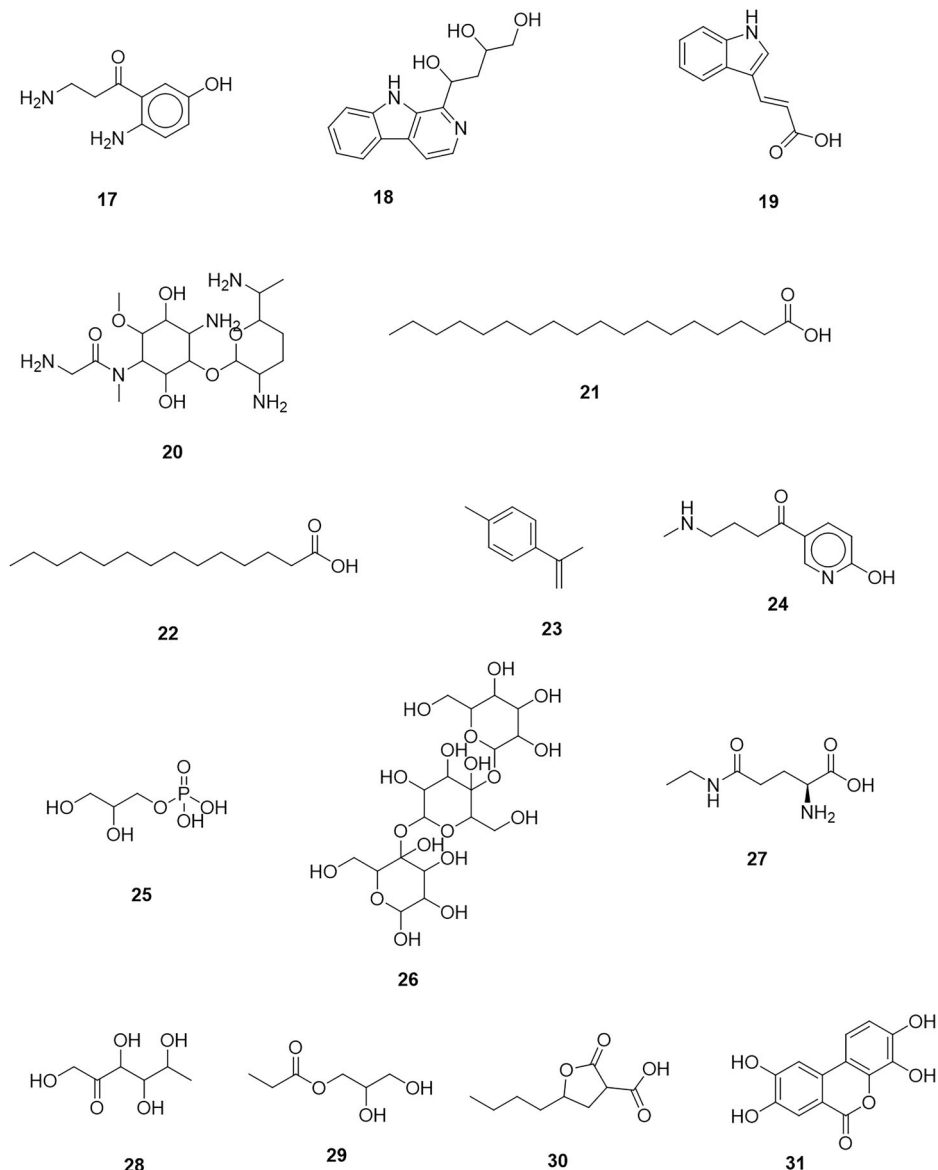
Non-peptides from Bacteroidetes and their biological activities

Bacteroidaceae, along with Firmicutes, are crucial because of their increased prevalence compared to other phyla. This phylum is primarily involved in the process of metabolizing polysaccharides⁵⁴. Their contribution to the bioactive compound profile is lower than that of Firmicutes. However, certain genera produce compounds that are described in Table 3.

Bacteroides fragilis is a bacterial species commonly found in the human colon, where it plays a crucial role in gut microbiota and contributes to overall health maintenance. It produces cholic acid (**32**) and deoxycholic acid (**33**)⁵⁵ and exhibits antibacterial properties. However, it can also act as an opportunistic pathogen, potentially causing infections⁵⁶. Numerous species i.e., *B. ovatus*, *B. eggerthii*, *B. fragilis*, *B. thetaiotaomicron*, and *Parabacteroides distasonis* were evaluated for the production of metabolites, and as a result, benzoic acid (**34**), phenyl acid (**35**), phenyl propionic acid (**36**), phenyl pyruvic acid (**37**), phenyl lactic acid (**38**), methyl benzene (**39**), 4-hydroxyphenyl acetic acid (**40**), 4-hydroxy benzoic acid (**41**), p-cresol (**42**) (in some of them), indole 3-acetic acid (**43**), indole 3-lactic acid (**44**), and methyl indole (**45**) (in some of them) were found⁵⁷. The structures of these compounds, along with **46** and **47** are shown in Fig. 6.

B. fragilis also produces oligosaccharide, polysaccharide A, and glycolipid α -galactosylceramide (**46**) which display immunomodulatory effects; other *Bacteroides* spp. produce propionic acid (**47**) with a similar effect²³. Sphingolipids play a crucial role in the structure of cellular membranes and act as important signaling molecules in eukaryotes, which are vital in regulating inflammation and immunity. They have recently gained interest due to their status as the metabolite that exhibits the most notable variations in abundance in the stool of patients with inflammatory bowel disease. Most sphingolipids, such as ceramide phosphoinositol (**48**), dihydroceramides (**49**), galactosylceramide (**50**), 1-deoxydihydroceramide (**51**), ceramide phosphoethanolamine (**52**), 1-O-(α -D-galactosyl)-N-hexacosanoylphythosphingosine (KRN7000) (**53**), and GSL-Bf717 (**54**) are derived from human *Bacteroides*^{58–60}. Their structures are displayed in Fig. 7. The genera *odoribacter* and *alisticipes* from *Bacteroides* are widely recognized for their ability to synthesize sulfolipids. The utilization of sulfolipids as

Fig. 5 | Structures of 5-hydroxykynurenamine (17), 2S,4R-4-(9H-pyrido[3,4-b]indol-1-yl)-1,2,4-butanetriol (18), indoleacrylic acid (19), fortimicin A (20), stearic acid (21), myristic acid (22), p-mentha-1,3,5,8-tetraene (23), 6 hydroxypseudooxynicotine (24), DL-glycerol 1-phosphate (25), 4-beta-D-glucan (26), L-theanine (27), L-fucose (28), glycerol-1-propanoate (29), 5-butyltetrahydro-2-oxo-3-furancarboxylic acid (30), and 3,4,8-trihydroxy urolithin (31).



a bacterial metabolite marker holds great potential for future investigations into the gut microbiota⁶¹.

Non-peptides from Proteobacteria and their biological activities

Proteobacteria is currently the most abundant phylum in the bacterial domain. However, their existence as part of the human microbiota is relatively less than that of the former two phyla. Proteobacteria are widely distributed throughout the body and play a crucial role⁶². *E. coli* is a prominent bacterium found in the Proteobacteria group and has numerous biological uses. The primary byproducts of their metabolism consist predominantly of peptides, which will be subsequently addressed^{63,64} Table 4).

Pseudomonas, a member of the same phylum, produces a metabolite called N-(3-oxo-dodecanoyl)-L-homoserine lactone (3-oxo-C12-HSL) (55), which serves as a signaling molecule and enhances inflammation during *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infection⁶⁵ (Table 4). *Pseudomonas* is typically absent from the human gut microbiota; however, it may colonize the gut following antibiotic treatment. This may elevate the likelihood of lung infections⁶⁶. Pyocyanin (56) is a virulence factor found in *P. aeruginosa* that has varied effects on different systems of the body, including the central nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory, and urological systems⁶⁷. *P. aeruginosa*,

a frequently observed source of biofilm infections, synthesizes a chemical called phenazine (57) in this particular setting. Phenazine aids in maintaining cellular redox equilibrium by accepting electrons⁶⁸. Exopolysaccharides and rhamnolipids have also been reported in *pseudomonas*^{69,70}. The structures of (55–57) are shown in Fig. 8.

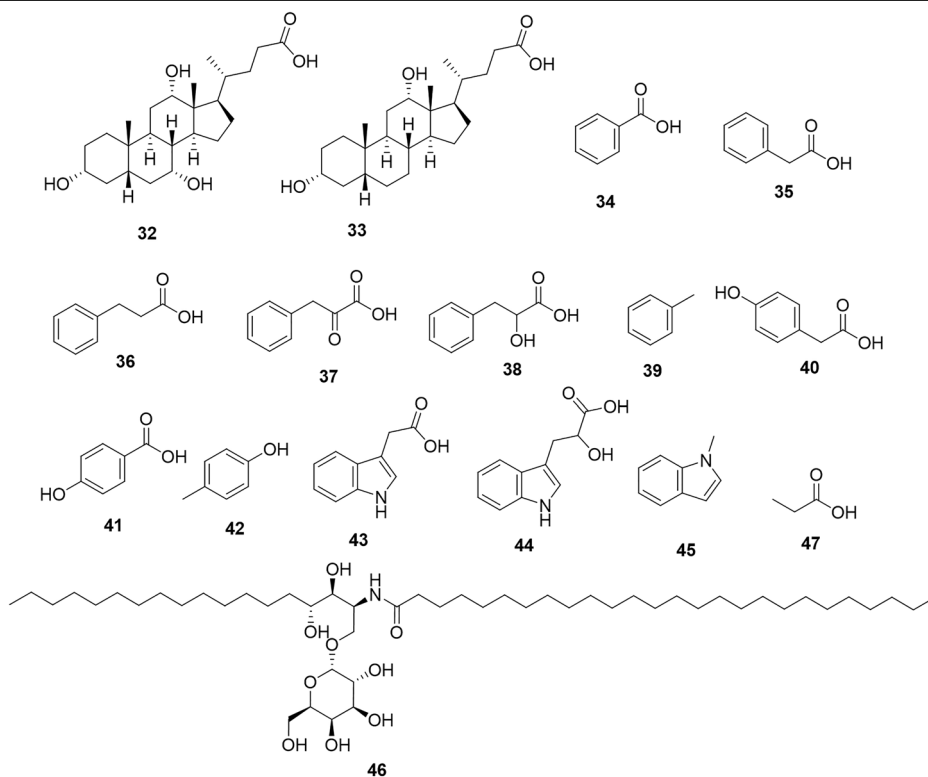
Siderophores are released by *Klebsiella pneumoniae* during infection. These siderophores affect tissue location, infection propagation, and viability of the host⁷¹. One of the toxins, a non-peptide pyrrolobenzodiazepine, was isolated from *K. oxytoca*; the toxin was tilivalline (58) and displayed cytotoxic activity⁷².

The human pathogenic bacterium *Enterobacter* is mainly associated with infections and healthcare facilities that lead to many diseases⁷³. It can result in opportunistic infections, which arise when the body's defenses are compromised, potentially disseminating to the bloodstream and leading to life-threatening conditions⁷⁴. Different toxins are generated by this genus such as endotoxins and uremic toxins, such as indole-3 acetic acid (59), 4-hydroxy phenyl lactate (60), trimethylamine-N-oxide (61), indoxyl sulfate (62), p-cresol sulfate (63), and imidazole propionate (64)⁷⁵. The structures of these compounds are shown in Fig. 9.

The inhibition of *Campylobacter jejuni* colonization by the gut microbiota is counteracted by butyric acid, a molecule generated by

Table 3 | Compounds produced by Bacteroidetes (except peptides)

Organism	Metabolite(s)	Activity	Ref.
<i>Bacteroides fragilis</i>	cholic acid (32), deoxycholic acid (33)	- antibacterial	55
	α -galactosylceramide (46), propionic acid (47)	- immunomodulatory	23
<i>Bacteroides</i> spp.	benzoic acid (34), phenyl acid (35), phenyl propionic acid (36), phenyl pyruvic acid (37), phenyl lactic acid (38), methyl benzene (39), 4-hydroxyphenyl acetic acid (40), 4-hydroxy benzoic acid (41), p-cresol (42), indole 3-acetic acid (43), indole 3-lactic acid (44), methyl indole (45)	- antibacterial - antioxidant	57
	ceramide phosphoinositol (48), dihydroceramides (49), galactosylceramide (50), 1-deoxydihydroceramide (51), 1-ceramide phosphoethanolamine (52), 1-1-O-(α -D-galactosyl)-N-hexacosanoylphosphatidylcholine (53), 1-GSL-Bf717 (54)	- potential markers for the gut microbiota and regulators of inflammation and immunity	58–60
<i>Odoribacter</i> and <i>Alistipes</i>	sulfonolipids	- potential markers for bacterial metabolite studies of the gut microbiota	61

Fig. 6 | Structures of cholic acid (32), deoxycholic acid (33), benzoic acid (34), phenyl acid (35), phenyl propionic acid (36), phenyl pyruvic acid (37), phenyl lactic acid (38), methyl benzene (39), 4-hydroxyphenyl acetic acid (40), 4-hydroxy benzoic acid (41), p-cresol (42), indole 3-acetic acid (43), indole 3-lactic acid (44), methyl indole (45), α -galactosylceramide (46), and propionic acid (47).

microbes. Figure 10 shows that butyric acid (65) and deoxycholic acid (66) both reduced the severity of *C. jejuni*-induced colitis^{12,76}.

Non-peptides from Actinobacteria (Actinomycetota) and their biological activities

Actinobacteria constitute a small portion of the human microbiota, however, they play a vital role in the body and are mainly found on the skin and

mucosal surfaces^{77–79}. Many genera in this phylum are important for infection, and some produce metabolites.

For example, *Bifidobacterium longum* BL-10 exhibits robust antioxidant properties that are attributed to the presence of distinct genes. *B. longum* is a prevalent bacterium in the human gastrointestinal tract linked to several health advantages; it is among the first bacteria to inhabit the gut and remains there throughout a person's life⁸⁰. Bifidobacteria has been found to produce

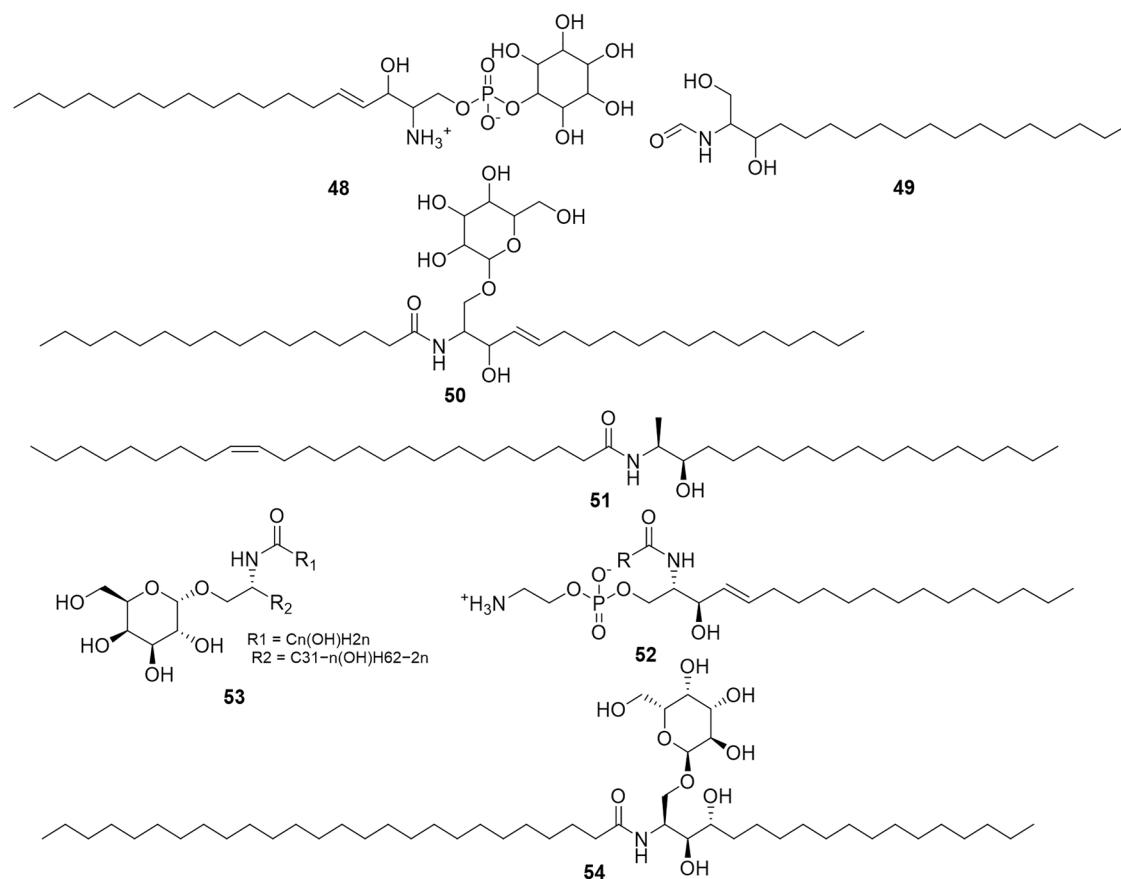


Fig. 7 | Structures of ceramide phosphoinositol (**48**), dihydroceramides (**49**), galactosylceramide (**50**), 1-deoxydihydroceramide (**51**), ceramide phosphoethanolamine (**52**), 1-O-(α -D-galactosyl)-N-hexacosanoylphytosphingosine (KRN7000) (**53**), and GSL-Bf717 (**54**).

Table 4 | Compounds produced by Proteobacteria (except peptides)

Organism	Metabolite(s)	Activity/Effect	Ref.
<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	N-(3-oxo-dodecanoyl)-L-homoserine lactone (3-oxo-C12-HSL) (55)	- signaling molecule that enhances inflammation during infection.	65
	Pyocyanin (56)	- virulence factor affecting the central nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory, and urological systems.	67
	Phenazine (57)	- chemical aiding in maintaining cellular redox equilibrium; supports biofilm formation.	68
	Exopolysaccharides, Rhamnolipids	- biofilm-associated compounds.	69,70
<i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i>	Siderophores	- compounds influencing infection propagation, tissue targeting, and host viability.	71
<i>Klebsiella oxytoca</i>	Tilivalline (58)	- non-peptide pyrrolbenzodiazepine toxin with cytotoxic activity.	72
<i>Enterobacter spp.</i>	Indole-3 acetic acid (59), 4-Hydroxy phenyl lactate (60), Trimethylamine-N-oxide (61), Indoxyl sulfate (62), p-Cresol sulfate (63), Imidazole propionate (64)	- toxins and uremic toxins associated with infections and health-care-related diseases.	75

phenylacetic acid (**68**), which is a metabolite derived from amino acids¹². However, harmful bacteria, such as *Corynebacterium*, are normally present in the respiratory organs and are associated with many diseases. Corynomycolic acid (**67**) and corynebactin (**69**) have been isolated from the skin of corynebacterium spp¹². The structures of (**67**–**69**) are shown in Fig. 11.

Another type of bacteria that causes diseases is *Rhodococcus* spp., which exists in several regions of the body, including the gastrointestinal tract, skin, and mouth. *Rhodococcus erythropolis* exhibits significant antibacterial activity against a wide range of microbes. *R. erythropolis* JCM 6824 produces quinolone-type antibiotics such as aurachin RE (**70**) and aurachin C (**71**).

The former exhibits antibacterial activity by attacking gram-positive bacteria^{81,82}. Furthermore, *R. erythropolis* generates siderophores such as heterobactin A (**72**) and B (**73**)¹². Humimycin A (**74**) and B (**75**) have also been isolated from *R. erythropolis* and *R. equi*; both humimycins exhibit antibacterial activity against methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*⁸³. The structures of (**70**–**75**) are shown in Fig. 12.

Mycobacterium species are associated with many human diseases. This genus is particularly important because it is one of the most renowned pathogens responsible for tuberculosis⁸⁴. Some lipids called phthiocerol dimycocerosates have been identified in *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. These

Fig. 8 | Structures of N-(3-oxo-dodecanoyl)-l-homoserine lactone (3-oxo-C12-HSL) (55), pyocyanin (56), and phenazine (57).

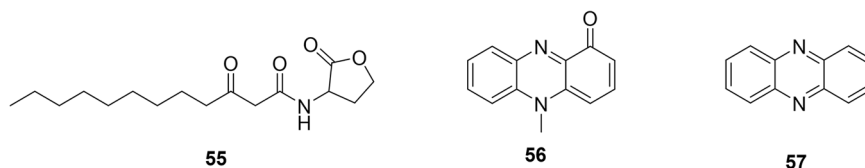


Fig. 9 | Structures of tilivalline (58), indole-3 acetic acid (59), 4-hydroxy phenyl lactate (60), trimethylamine-N-oxide (61), indoxyl sulfate (62), p-cresol sulfate (63), and imidazole propionate (64).

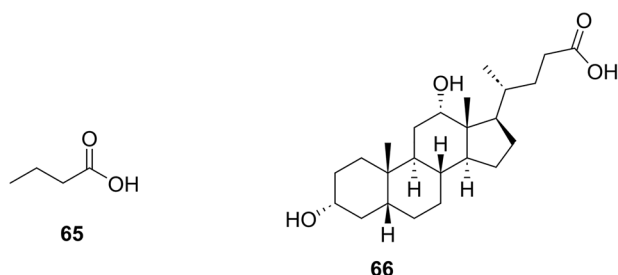
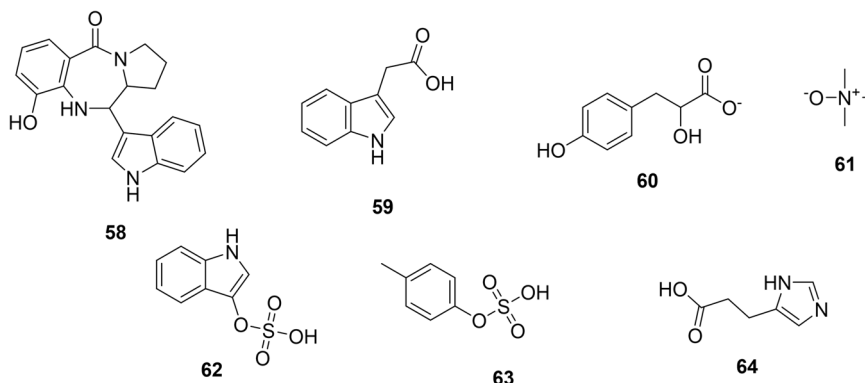


Fig. 10 | Structures of butyric acid (65) and deoxycholic acid (66).

bacteria contain many of the lipids that are prevalent in their pathogenicity. The structure of phthiocerol dimycocerosate from *M. leprae* is shown in Fig. 13 (76)^{85,86}. Lipoarabinomannan is a glycolipid that is essential for the structural integrity of the cell wall of *M. tuberculosis*. Lipoarabinomannan has also been detected in the urine of patients diagnosed with tuberculosis⁸⁷. *M. ulcerans*, a different species, is the primary cause of Buruli ulcers, a debilitating skin disorder characterized by extensive ulceration of the epidermis. Different geographical regions of the 34 *M. ulcerans* isolates produce structural variants of mycolactone polyketides A–D (77–80) and lactone (Fig. 13). The polyketide-derived macrolide toxin plays a significant role in the tissue destruction and immunological suppression observed in cases of Buruli ulcers⁸⁸.

Nocardia is a pathogenic bacterium that causes nocardiosis in humans. It is a member of the Actinobacteria family and is recognized for producing a diverse array of compounds with antimicrobial and antitumor properties. *Nocardia* produces many compounds such as brasiliolide A (81), brasiliolide B (82), nocardicyclin A (83), nocardicyclin B (84), and transvalencin Z (85)^{89–91}. *Nocardia* spp. yield numerous siderophores. Examples include nocobactin NA (86), JBIR-16 (87), nocardamine (88), asterobactin (89), and brasilibactin A (90)⁹². Other phyla, namely, Fusobacteria and Verrucomicrobia, have not been studied in terms of their metabolites. The structures of (81–90) are shown in Figs. 14 and 15.

Fungi in the human microbiota and their metabolites and biological activities

Fungi are important constituents of the human microbiota, although they are less prevalent than bacteria and account for 0.1% of the total gut

microbiota. They are found in different environments, including the gastrointestinal system, skin, oral cavity, and urogenital tract^{93,94}. The human gut mycobiome consists of more than 66 genera and 184 species of fungi, with *Candida*, *Saccharomyces*, *Cladosporium*, *Malassezia*, and *Rhodotorula* being the most prevalent.

Different fungi in humans cause different diseases; for instance, the presence of *Candida* species in the gastrointestinal tract can result in the development of candidiasis when they become excessively abundant. *Candida albicans* is a common commensal in the oral cavity; however, excessive proliferation can lead to the development of an oral thrush^{95,96}. On the contrary, *Malassezia* species, such as *Malassezia furfur*, have been associated with skin disorders such as dandruff and seborrheic dermatitis. Furthermore, notably, fungi present in the urogenital tract encompass *Candida* species that can cause vaginal yeast infections; however, research on this aspect is limited. Although fungi are less abundant than bacteria, they play a significant role in microbial diversity, which affects human health through interactions within the microbiota and metabolite synthesis. For example, fungi are known to interact with various gut bacteria, a well-documented example being the overgrowth of *Candida* following antibiotic treatment in humans, highlighting their competitive relationship. Additionally, a study using gnotobiotic mice demonstrated that a small fungal community (comprising five species) can induce significant ecological shifts in gut bacterial assembly. The same study further revealed that interkingdom interactions (bacteria-fungi) play a crucial role in shaping the early-stage assembly of both bacterial and fungal communities. Moreover, fungal metabolites impact metabolic diseases. For example, candidalysin damages hepatocytes and promotes IL-1 β secretion via NLRP3 inflammasome activation, whereas altenusin improves metabolic parameters by reducing fat mass, hepatic steatosis, and insulin resistance. Additionally, dehydrocurvularin, (S)-curvularin, galiellalactone, and oxacyclododecandione regulate glucose tolerance and hepatic steatosis by inhibiting TGF- β /Smad signaling. These compounds also exhibit anti-inflammatory effects by downregulating pro-inflammatory cytokines and markers⁹⁷. Additional investigation into the role of fungi in the microbiota is crucial for a thorough understanding of the interactions between hosts and microbes, as well as their consequences in health and diseases^{98–100}.

Patients with cystic fibrosis are most often affected by *P. aeruginosa*. *C. albicans* and *Aspergillus fumigatus* may coexist with *P. aeruginosa* in the cystic fibrotic lung environment; however, the disease implications of this coexistence are unknown. Recent scientific investigations have confirmed

Fig. 11 | Structures of phenylacetic acid (**67**), corynomycolic acid (**68**), and corynebactin (**69**).

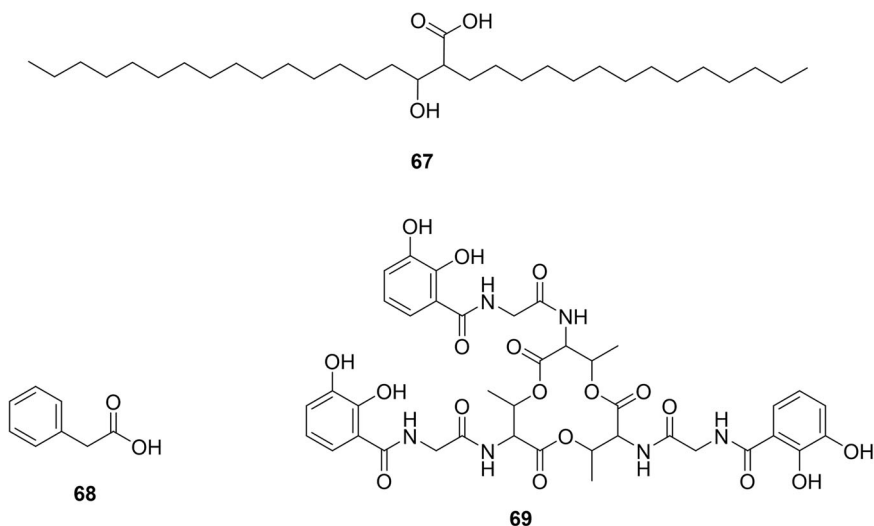
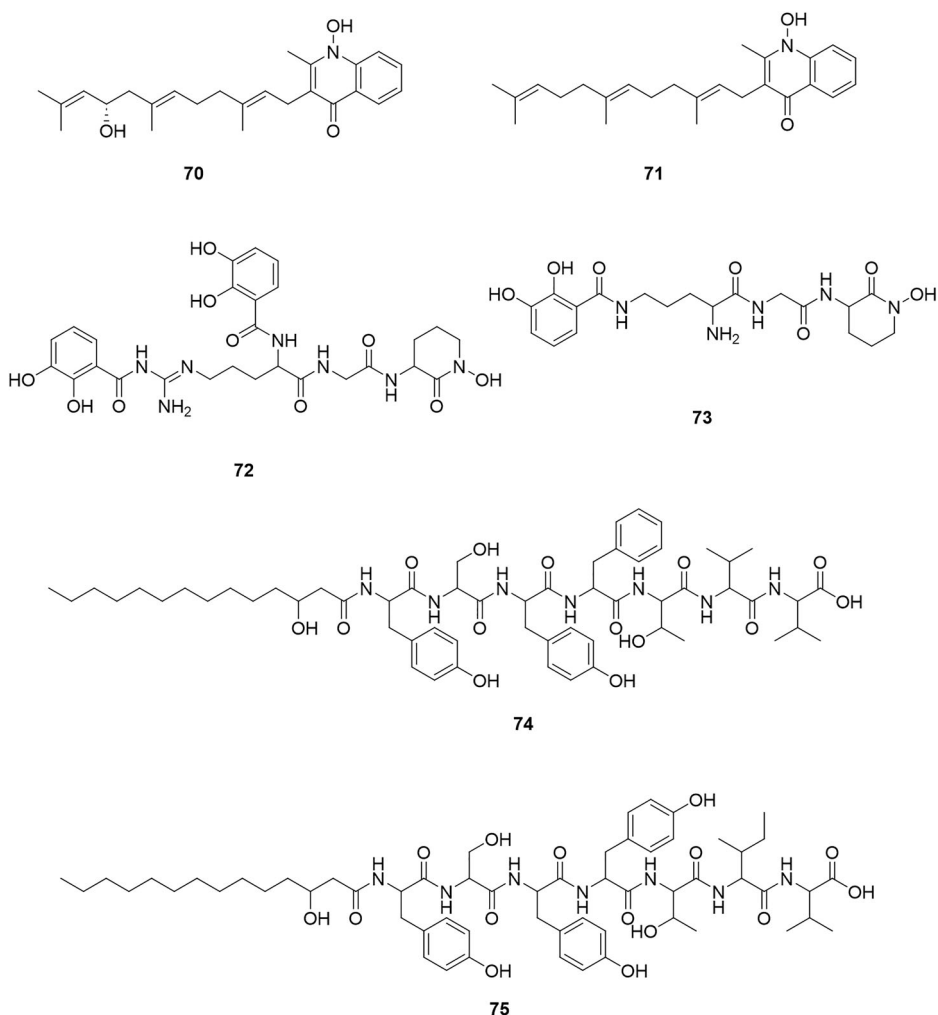


Fig. 12 | Structures of aurachin RE (**70**), aurachin C (**71**), heterobactin A and B (**72** and **73**), and humimycin A and B (**74** and **75**).



the presence of *P. aeruginosa* and *C. albicans* signaling pathways. More specifically, 3-oxo-C12HSL, a chemical produced by bacteria, can affect the shape of *Candida*, whereas farnesol (**91**), a metabolite produced by fungi, can lower the concentrations of pyocyanin and the *Pseudomonas* quinolone signal^{98,101,102}. *C. tropicalis*, a pathogenic fungus frequently present in the human oral cavity, skin, and digestive tract, produces a lipopeptide called

YM-170320 (**92**), which can inhibit the formation of ergosterol production in fungi^{103,104}.

Shuai et al. conducted a study examining fungal communities in the human gut. Their goal was to evaluate the factors affecting the stability of the gut microbiome in middle-aged and elderly adults. In addition, their study identified 47 fungal metabolites, 13 of which were identified as fatty acids.

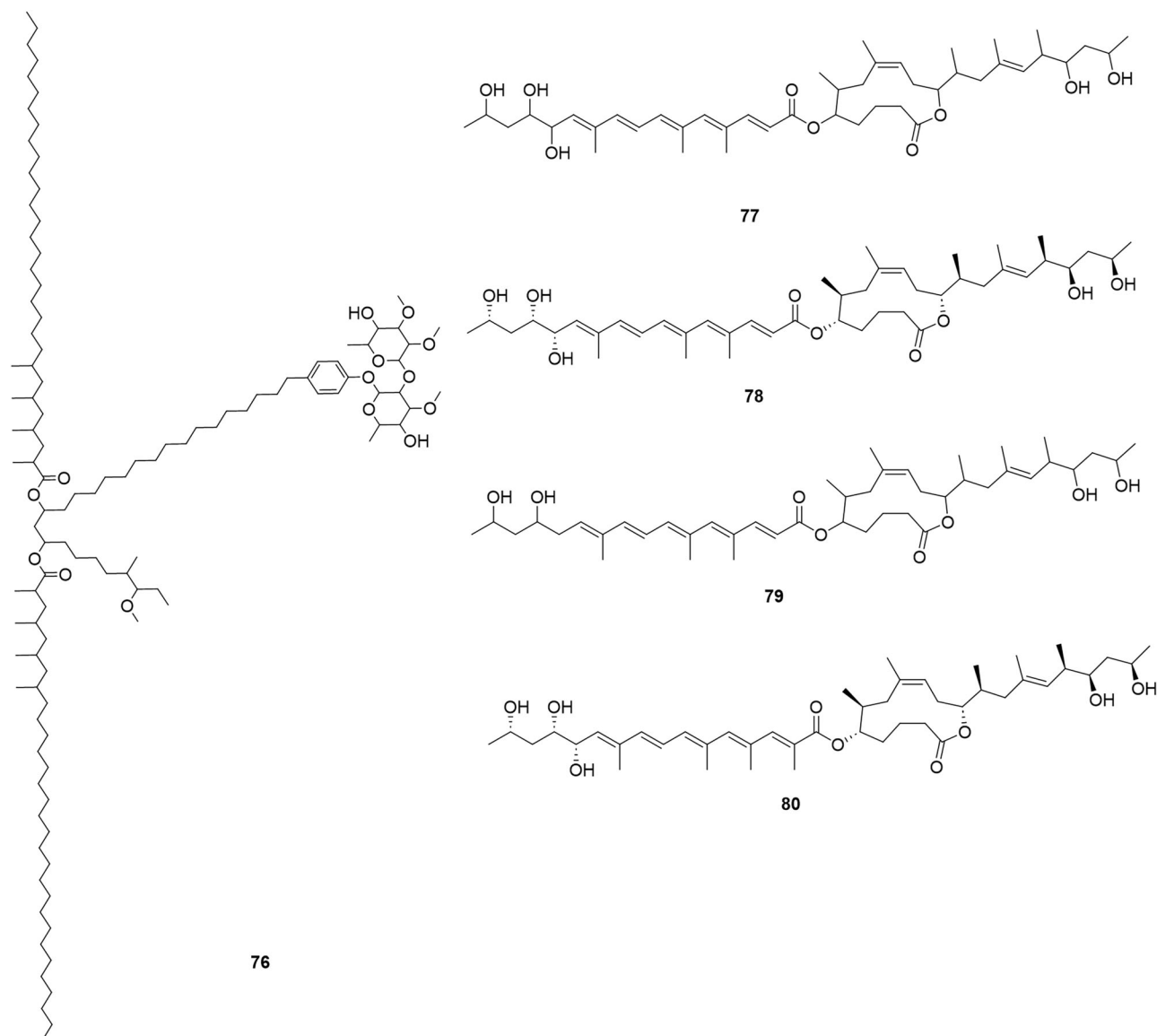


Fig. 13 | Structures of phthiocerol dimycocerosate (76) and mycolactone polyketides A–D (77–80).

The main compounds influencing the diversity of the total gut mycobiome are 3-methyladipic acid (93), tridecanoic acid (94), and ethylmethylacetic acid (95). In addition, most of the fecal metabolites showed a correlation with particular fungal taxa metabolites, such as carnosine (96), D-gluconolactone (97), and L-threonine (98)¹⁰⁵. The structures of (91–98) are shown in Fig. 16.

A. fumigatus is the predominant species in the *Aspergillus* genus that is responsible for producing infectious lung illnesses. This species is known for its capacity to produce a diverse array of extrolites, including secondary metabolites, acids, and proteins such as hydrophobins and extracellular enzymes. A previous study showed 226 active bioactive metabolites from *A. fumigatus*, which were classified into 24 different biosynthetic families. Within these groups, a range of secondary metabolites were identified, such as gliotoxins, trypacidin, fumigaclavines, verruculogens, fumiquinazolines, monomethylsulochrins, fumagillins, fumigatins, pseurotins, chloroanthraquinones, fumitremorgins, helvolic acids, and pyripyropenes with the help of high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) in conjunction with diode array and mass spectrometric detection^{106,107}. Overall, there are approximately a billion cases of human fungal infections, leading to 1.6 million fatalities^{108,109}. Although the sources of this mycobiome are not human, they still have an impact on the human body, as mentioned. Thus, it

is imperative to identify the specific metabolites produced by these pathogenic fungi when they infect the human body. *Rhodotorula* spp., widely distributed in the environment, belong to basidiomycetous fungi. Transmission and colonization in humans primarily occur through air and food. While intestinal colonization is common, overgrowth is usually suppressed as the body's temperature exceeds their optimal growth range. However, excessive presence may increase the risk of fungemia and subsequent organ infections, particularly in individuals with weakened immune systems. Conversely, in a well-balanced colonization state, these fungi can be beneficial, as they produce valuable nutrients such as proteins, lipids, folate, and carotenoids¹¹⁰.

Dietary factors, especially prebiotics, play a crucial role in shaping metabolites generated by human microbiota. They serve as substrates for particular gut bacteria, facilitating fermentation processes that yield beneficial metabolites such as SCFAs. These metabolites can positively influence host health by regulating immune function, enhancing gut barrier integrity, and affecting metabolic processes. Dietary fiber is the main substrate for bacterial metabolite production, especially those abundant in prebiotics such as inulin and fructooligosaccharides (FOS). Bacterial fermentation of prebiotics results in the production of SCFAs, including acetate, propionate, and butyrate, which are key metabolites influencing host health^{111,112}. This

Fig. 14 | Structures of brasilinolides A and B (**81** and **82**), nocardicyclins A and B (**83** and **84**), transvalencin Z (**85**), and nocobactin NA (**86**).

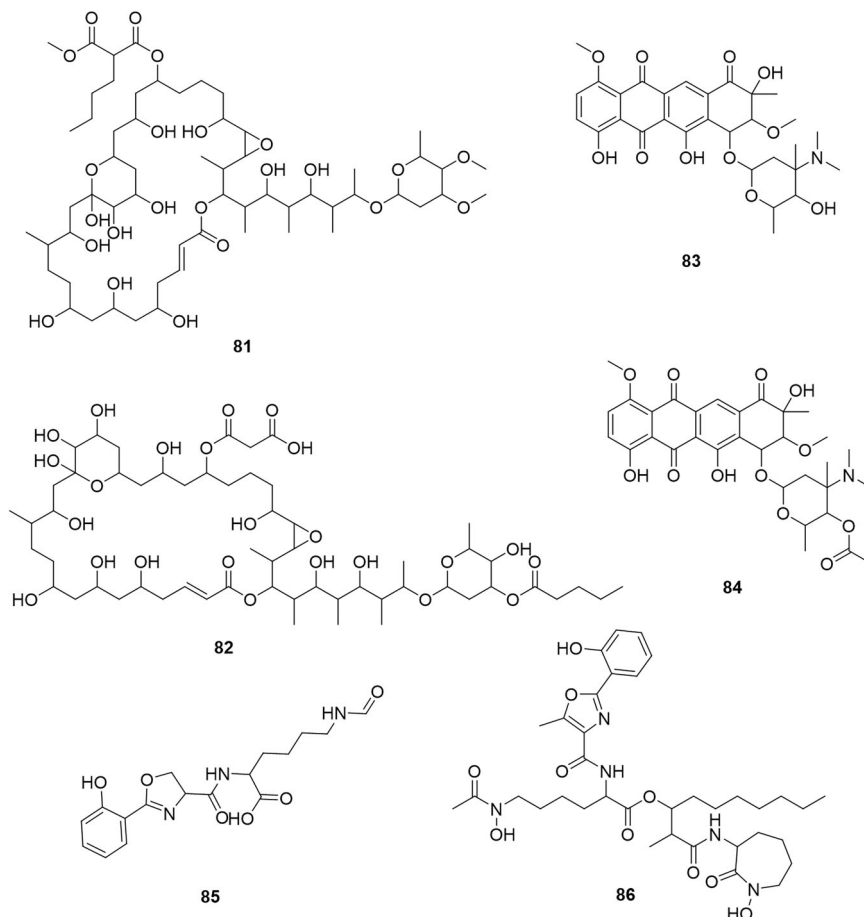
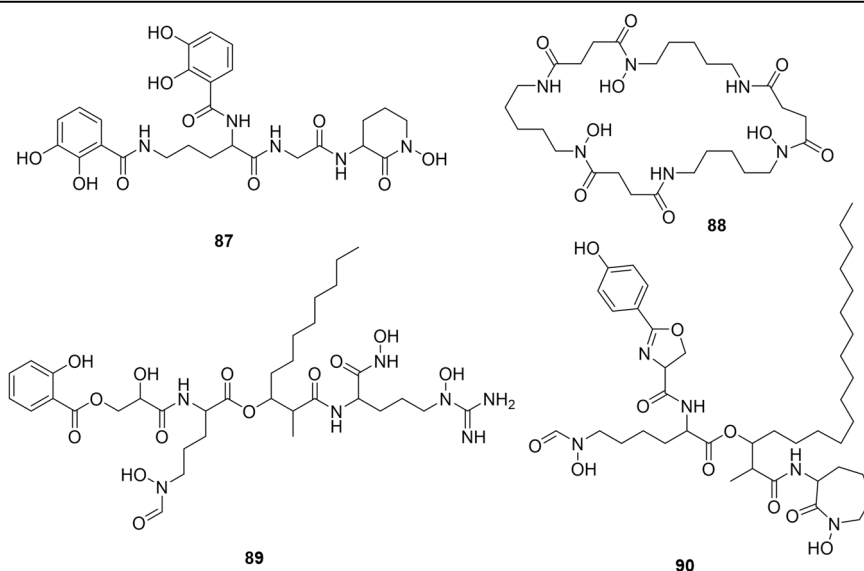


Fig. 15 | Structures of JBIR-16 (**87**), nocardamine (**88**), asterobactin (**89**), and brasilibactin A (**90**).



highlights the significant influence of dietary factors on microbiota-derived metabolites and overall human health (Tables 5, 6).

Important peptides from the human microbiota

Peptides originating from the human microbiome function primarily as antibacterial agents. These microbiota can have commensal and mutualistic relationships, as well as pathogenic effects, leading to the production of various peptides. Commensals typically produce bacteriocins and peptides

that specifically target harmful bacteria¹¹³. The biological roles of these peptides were studied in detail in our recent review article²². Here, we highlight the important peptides and their sources that can aid in drug discovery and the identification of a new framework from the human microbiota (Table 7).

Nisin was discovered in *Lactococcus lactis subsp. lactis*. This antibacterial peptide is synthesized by specific *Streptococcus* species. Nisin A (Fig. 17), the first identified form, is a polypeptide consisting of 34 amino

Fig. 16 | Structures of farnesol (91), YM-170320 (92), 3-methyladipic acid (93), tridecanoic acid (94), ethylmethylacetic acid (95), carnosine (96), D-gluconolactone (97), and L-threonine (98).

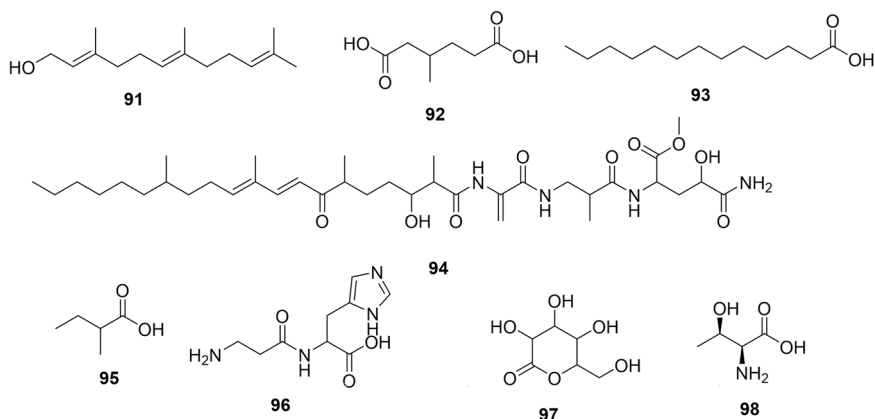


Table 5 | Compounds produced by Actinobacteria (except peptides)

Organism	Metabolite(s)	Activity/Effect	Ref.
<i>Bifidobacterium longum</i>	Phenylacetic acid (68)	- antioxidant properties	80
<i>Corynebacterium spp.</i>	Corynomycolic acid (67), Corynebactin (69)	- associated with respiratory diseases; metabolites isolated from skin isolates.	12
<i>Rhodococcus erythropolis</i>	Aurachin RE (70), Aurachin C (71)	- Aurachin RE targets gram-positive bacteria.	81,82
	Heterobactin A (72), Heterobactin B (73)	- siderophores with antibacterial activities	12
	Humimycin A (74), Humimycin B (75)	- active against MRSA	83
<i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i>	Phthiocerol Dimycocerosate (76)	- lipids linked to pathogenesis.	85,86
	Lipoarabinomannan	- structural integrity of cell wall; detected in urine of tuberculosis patients	87
<i>Mycobacterium ulcerans</i>	Mycolactone polyketides A (77), B (78), C (79), D (80)	- macrolide toxins causing tissue destruction and immunological suppression in Buruli ulcer cases	88
<i>Nocardia spp.</i>	Brasilinolide A (81), Brasilinolide B (82)	- antimicrobial and antitumor properties	89–92
	Nocardicyclin A (83), Nocardicyclin B (84)	- antimicrobial properties	
	Transvalencin Z (85)	- antimicrobial properties	
	Nocobactin NA (86), JBIR-16 (87), Nocardamine (88), Asterobactin (89), Brasilibactin A (90)	- siderophores contributing to various bioactivities	

Table 6 | Compounds produced by fungi in the human microbiota (except peptides)

Organism	Metabolite(s)	Activity/Effect	Ref.
<i>Candida tropicalis</i>	YM-170320 (92)	- inhibits ergosterol production in fungi.	103,104
<i>Aspergillus fumigatus</i>	gliotoxins, tryptacidin, fumigaclavines, fumiquinazolines, helvolic acids, 226 additional metabolites.	- lung infections and produces extrolites	106,107
<i>Candida albicans</i>	farnesol (91)	- reduces pyocyanin and <i>Pseudomonas</i> quinolone signaling molecules.	100,102,103
Various fungi (gut microbiome)	3-methyladipic acid (93), tridecanoic acid (94), ethylmethylacetic acid (95), carnosine (96), D-gluconolactone (97), L-threonine (98)	- influence the diversity and stability of the gut mycobiome	105

acids with a molecular weight of 3500 Da. It comprises two distinct groups: methyllanthionine and lanthionine. During biosynthesis, the nisin leader peptide plays a crucial role in facilitating interactions between precursor nisin and its modification enzymes, NisB and NisC, which are responsible for posttranslational maturation. NisB dehydrates serines and threonines,

while NisC catalyzes the subsequent coupling of the formed dehydroamino acids to form lanthionines¹¹⁴. This peptide has been approved by the FDA and is considered safe according to GRAS standards. In addition to its use as a food preservative, it is used in biomedicine^{115–117}. Various variants of nisin have been identified since 1928. They include nisin A¹¹⁸, nisin Z¹¹⁹, nisin

Table 7 | Representative peptides produced by the human microbiota

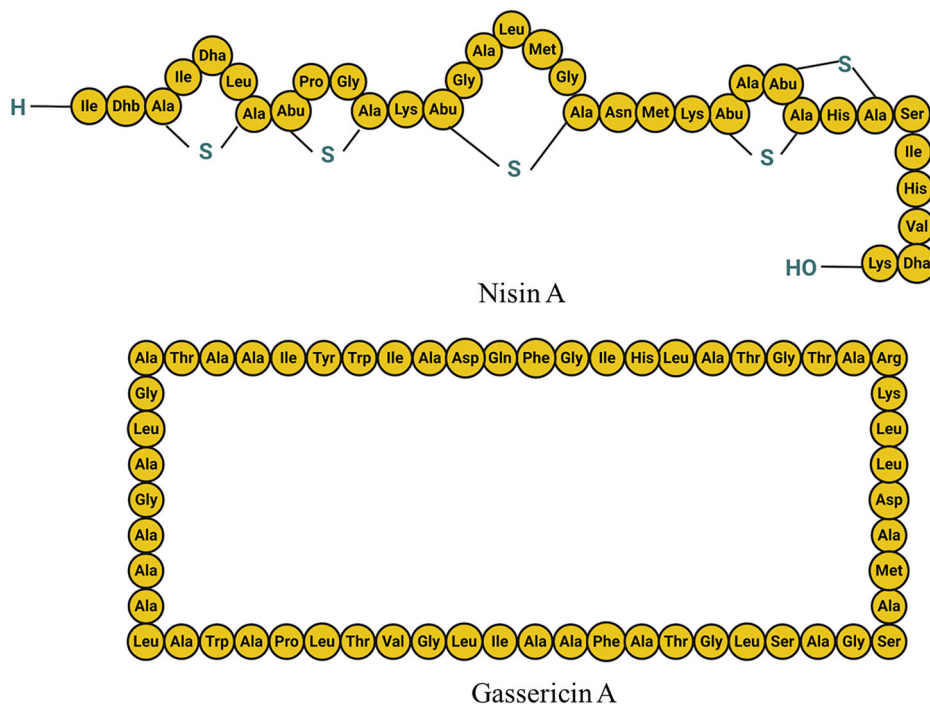
Organism	Metabolite(s)	Activity/Effect	Ref.
<i>Lactococcus lactis</i> subsp. <i>lactis</i>	nisin A	antibacterial, FDA-approved	118
<i>Lactococcus lactis</i>	nisin Z	antibacterial	119
<i>Lactococcus lactis</i>	nisin Q	antibacterial	120
<i>Lactococcus lactis</i>	nisin F	antibacterial	121
<i>Streptococcus uberis</i>	nisin U, U2	antibacterial	122
<i>S. gallolyticus</i> subsp. <i>Pasteurianus</i>	nisin P	antibacterial	123
<i>Blautia obeum</i>	nisin O1–O4	antibacterial	125
<i>Staphylococcus capitis</i>	nisin J	antibacterial	124
<i>Lactobacillus gasseri</i> (LA39)	gassericin A	antibacterial	128
<i>Lactobacillus gasseri</i> (SBT 2055)	gassericin T	antibacterial	129
<i>Lactobacillus gasseri</i> (JV-V03)	lactocillin	antibacterial	14
<i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i> (LL441)	plantaricin C	antibacterial, membrane disruption	132
<i>Lactobacillus plantarum</i> (C11)	plantaricin A, EF, JK	antibacterial	133
<i>Lactobacillus acidophilus</i> (M46)	acidocin B	antibacterial	135
<i>Lactobacillus acidophilus</i> (JCM1132)	acidocin J1132	antibacterial	27
<i>Lactobacillus rhamnosus</i> (68)	rhamnosin A	antibacterial	136
<i>Lactobacillus amylovorus</i> (DCE 471)	amylovorin L471 (lactobin A)	antibacterial	137
<i>Lactobacillus johnsonii</i>	lactacin F (lactacin A + lafX)	antibacterial	138
<i>Streptococcus salivarius</i> (UCC118)	salivaricin ABP-118	antibacterial	140
<i>Streptococcus salivarius</i>	salivaricin D	antibacterial	141
<i>Clostridium botulinum</i> (213B)	boticin B	antibacterial	146,147
<i>Clostridium beijerinckii</i> (ATCC 25752)	circularin A	antibacterial	
<i>Clostridium tyrobutyricum</i> (ADRIAT 932)	closticin 574	antibacterial	
<i>Enterococcus faecium</i>	bacteriocin 43	antibacterial	148
<i>Enterococcus faecalis</i>	bacteriocins 31 and 32	antibacterial	150,151
<i>Enterococcus faecalis</i> (RC714)	bacteriocin RC714	antibacterial	151
<i>Staphylococcus epidermidis</i>	epilancin 15X, epidermin, Pep5	antibacterial	153–156
<i>Staphylococcus epidermidis</i> (K7)	epilancin K7	antibacterial	
<i>Staphylococcus epidermidis</i> (BN 280)	epicidin 280	antibacterial	161
<i>Staphylococcus lugdunensis</i>	lugdunin	antibacterial	164
<i>Staphylococcus hominis</i>	micrococcin P1	antibacterial	165
<i>Streptococcus mutans</i> (UA159)	mutanamide	antibacterial	166,167
<i>Streptococcus mutans</i>	mutacin I and BNY266	antibacterial	168,169
<i>Escherichia coli</i> (LR05)	microcin L	antibacterial	173
<i>Escherichia coli</i> (Nissle 1917)	microcins M and H47	antibacterial	174,175
<i>Escherichia coli</i> (AY25)	microcin J25	antibacterial	177,178
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	microcin V (colicin V), microcin B	antibacterial	
<i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i>	colibactin	cytotoxic	183
<i>Klebsiella oxytoca</i>	tilivalline, tilimycin	cytotoxic	185,186
<i>Bacteroides vulgatus</i>	commendamide	bioactive	
<i>Bifidobacterium bifidum</i>	bifidocin B	antibacterial	186
<i>Bifidobacterium infantis</i>	bifidin I	antibacterial	187

Q¹²⁰, and nisin F¹²¹ from *L. lactis*, nisin U and U2 from *Streptococcus uberis*¹²², nisin P from *S. gallolyticus* subsp. *Pasteurianus* (human fecal isolate)¹²³, nisin J from *Staphylococcus capitis*¹²⁴, nisin O1 to O4 from *Blautia obeum*¹²⁵, and nisin H (non-human source) from *S. hyointestinalis*¹²⁶.

Gassericins and plantaricins are bacteriocins, and several such peptides have been isolated from the human microbiota. Gassericins are primarily produced by *Lactobacillus gasseri* and exhibit antimicrobial properties. Their biosynthesis involves leader peptide cleavage, enzymatic cyclization, and ABC transporter-mediated secretion.

The circular nature of gassericin enhances its stability and prolongs its bioactivity¹²⁷. To date, several gassericins have been isolated, including gassericin A (Fig. 17), which has been isolated from the LA39 strain of *L. gasseri*. This strain was isolated from human feces and exhibited high antibacterial activity¹²⁸. Another strain, SBT 2055, of the same species resulted in the isolation of gassericin T with potent antibacterial properties¹²⁹. Reuterin 6 was first isolated from *L. reuteri* LA6b¹³⁰; however, it was later named gasserinin A after it was first reported in 1991¹³¹. *L. gasseri* JV-V03 resulted in the isolation of bioactive peptides

Fig. 17 | Putative structures of nisin A and gasser-icin A.



from a thiopeptide group called lactocillin, which exhibits antibacterial action¹⁴. On the contrary, plantaricins and bacteriocins have been reported from *L. plantarum*; for example, plantaricin C was isolated from the LL441 strain of *L. plantarum*, which displayed antibacterial activity by targeting the cytoplasmic membrane permeability barrier¹³². A C11 strain resulted in the isolation of plantaricin A, which displayed antimicrobial properties¹³³. Plantiricins EF and JK have been purified from *L. plantarum* C11, which demonstrates antagonistic antibacterial activity; notably, when plantaricins E and F and J and K are together, better bioactivity is achieved¹³⁴.

Furthermore, in terms of peptides from *Lactobacillus*, *L. acidophilus* M46 produced acidocin B, which displayed antibacterial activities against a range of bacteria¹³⁵; a strain of the same species, JCM1132, resulted in the isolation and purification of acidocin J1132²⁷. *L. rhamnosus* 68 produces rhamnosin A, which displayed antibacterial activity against *Micrococcus lysodeikticus*¹³⁶. The hydrophobic bacteriocin amylovorin L471 (lactobin A) is found in *L. amylovorus* DCE 471¹³⁷. The combination of two peptides, namely lactacin A and LafX, created another peptide named lactacin F, which was isolated from *L. johnsonii* and displayed antibacterial activity against other lactobacillus¹³⁸. Salivaricins are antibiotics derived mainly from *Streptococcus salivarius*. They exhibit antibacterial properties against a wide range of bacteria, particularly those found in the respiratory system¹³⁹. During the isolation of salivaricins from the human microbiota, *L. salivarius* subsp. *salivarius* UCC118, which is present in the gut, gave rise to salivaricin ABP-118¹⁴⁰. Furthermore, salivaricin D has been found in *S. salivarius*, which is found on human faces¹⁴¹. Regarding other salivaricins, A was isolated from *S. salivarius* 20P3, B was isolated from *S. salivarius* K12, D was isolated from *S. salivarius* 5M6c, and salivaricin 9 was isolated from *S. salivarius* NU1^{142–144}.

Clostridium, which belongs to the Firmicutes phylum, like *Lactobacillus* and others, is normally present in the gastrointestinal tract. It contains one of the most well-known species that causes many diseases, *Clostridioides difficile*¹⁴⁵. Boticin B, circularin A, and closticin 574 were the main peptides isolated from this genus; they were isolated from *C. botulinum* 213 B, *C. beijerinckii* ATCC 25752, and *C. tyrobutyricum* ADRIAT 932, respectively^{146,147}. Enterococci in the gastrointestinal tract play important

roles in the synthesis of many bioactive compounds^{34,35}. Bacteriocin 43 was found in *Enterococcus faecium*¹⁴⁸, bacteriocin 32 and 31 in *E. faecalis*^{149,150}, and bacteriocin RC714 was also found in *E. faecalis*¹⁵¹. All these compounds exhibited antibacterial properties. *S. faecalis* S-48, also called *E. faecalis*, produces another AMP, AS-48¹⁵². *Ruminococcus*, which is prevalent in the human microbiota, resulted in the isolation of ruminococcin A from *Ruminococcus gnavus*¹⁵³, and through a computational approach, ruminopeptin was identified in *R. bromii*¹⁵⁴.

Many types of *Staphylococcus* live on epithelial surfaces, such as the skin and nasal passages, and are highly valued in the human microbiome. Epilancin 15X was isolated from *Staphylococcus epidermidis* and has a structure similar to that of epilancin K7 isolated from *S. epidermidis* K7, which exhibits antimicrobial properties^{153–157}. Furthermore, epidermins from *S. epidermidis* Tu 3298¹⁵⁸, epidermicin NI01 from *S. epidermidis* 224¹⁵⁹, gallidermin from *S. gallinarum*¹⁶⁰, epicidin 280 from *S. epidermidis* BN 280¹⁶¹, pep5 from *S. epidermidis*¹⁶², and epilancin A37 have been reported in the *Staphylococcus* genus¹⁶³. Lugdunin, the first non-ribosomally synthesized peptide from the human microbiota, was isolated from *S. lugdunensis*¹⁶⁴. Similarly, *S. hominis* from the human microbiota produces micrococin P1¹⁶⁵.

Streptococcus mutans is the primary cause of dental caries and is typically found in the human microbiome. Different streptococci from the human microbiota produce many important peptides; for example, one of the oral pathogens, *S. mutans* UA159, yields mutanamide^{166,167}. The lantibiotics mutacin 1140 and mutacin-BNY266 have been reported in *S. mutans*^{168,169}. Gallocin A, a combination of two peptides, GllA1 and GllA2, has been detected in *S. gallolyticus* subsp. *Gallolyticus*; notably, both peptides are essential for biological activity, and a single peptide of the pair cannot affect the target bacteria¹⁷⁰. In the same series, gallocin D was isolated from *S. gallolyticus* LL009 and displayed potent activity against vancomycin-resistant enterococci¹⁷¹.

Escherichia, a well-known human microbiota belonging to the phylum Proteobacteria, is widely distributed throughout the human body^{44,172}. A definite type of peptide, namely microcins, has been found in specific species of *Escherichia coli*; for example, microcin L has been found in *E. coli* LR05¹⁷³, microcin M and microcin H47 in *E. coli* Nissle 1917^{174,175}, microcin J25 in

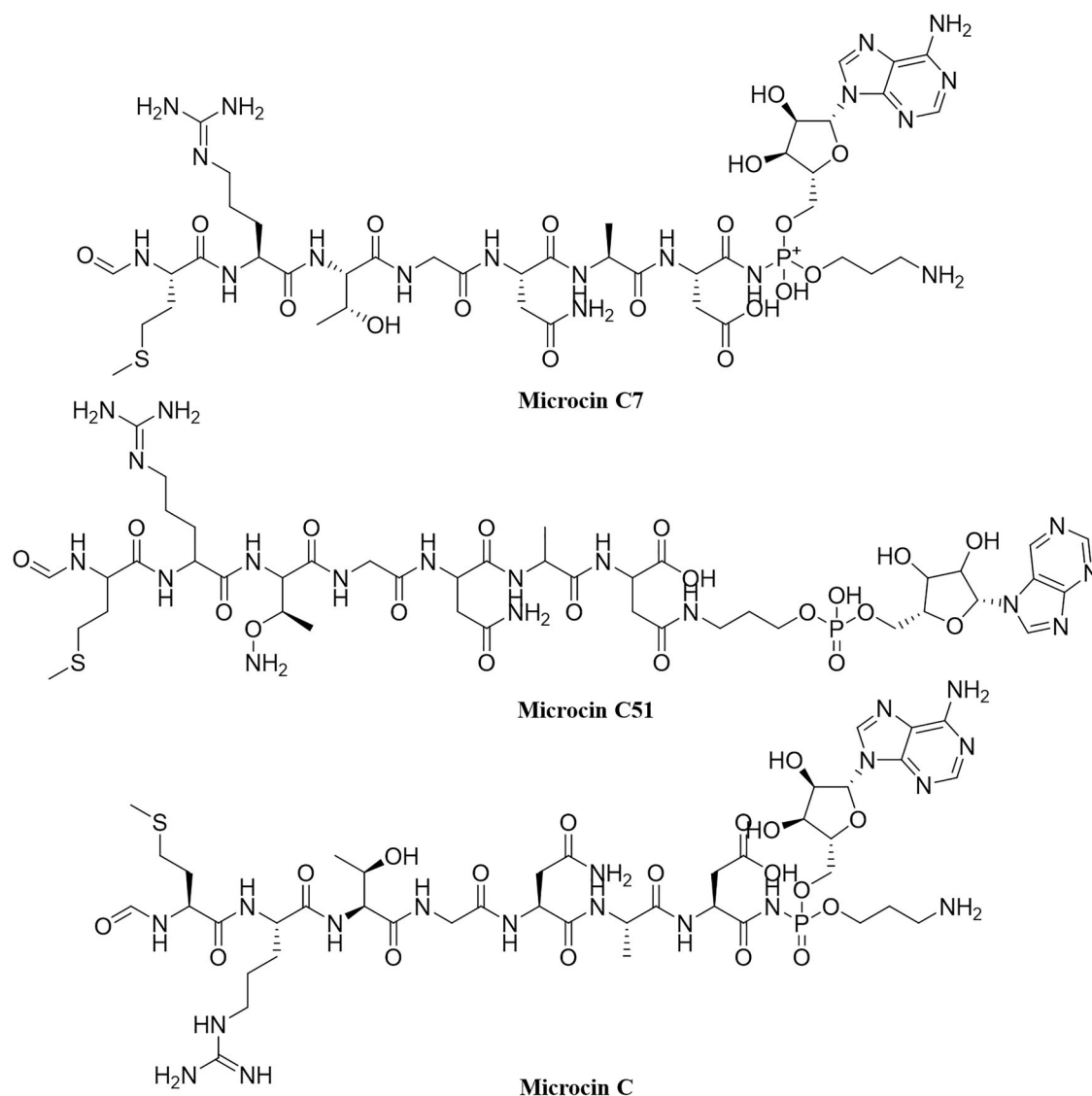


Fig. 18 | Structures of Microcin C7, C51, and C.

E. coli AY25¹⁷⁶, and microcin V (previously called colicin V) and microcins C7, C51, B, and C in *E. coli* with antimicrobial activities^{13,177,178}. The structures of some microcins are shown in Fig. 18. In other genera of Proteobacteria, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* produces the siderophore pyoverdine¹⁷⁹, and pyocins S2 and 2 have also been reported from similar species¹⁸⁰. The *Klebsiella* genus, commonly present in the human microbiota as a pathogen and one of the species of *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, has been given higher importance because of pneumonia^{181,182}. Different metabolites, including colibactin *K. pneumoniae*¹⁸³, pyrrolbenzodiazepines tilivalline, and tili-mycin, have been isolated from *K. oxytoca*, and displayed cytotoxic activities^{72,184,185}.

Another major phylum in the human microbiota is Actinobacteria, which is usually present in different parts of the human body. This phylum contains the pathogenic bacteria that cause tuberculosis⁷⁸. *Bifidobacterium* is a genus that produces BLD 1648 from *bifidobacterium longum* DJO10A¹³², bifidocin B from *B. bifidum*¹⁸⁶, and bifidin I from *B. infantis* BCRC 14602¹⁸⁷. Nocardithiocin is a thiopeptide that has been reported in *Nocardia pseudobrasiliensis* IFM 0757¹⁸⁸. Other compounds from this phylum have been identified in the non-peptide fraction. Bacteroidaceae are also widely distributed in the human microbiota and play a substantial role in the breakdown of polysaccharides^{37,189}. Commendamide, a bioactive peptide, has been

isolated from *Bacteroides vulgatus*¹⁹⁰. Additionally, bacteroidetocin A and B have been reported in this phylum¹⁹¹.

Future challenges and conclusive remarks

Following an extensive literature review, we found that the human microbiota not only contains peptides, but various non-peptide metabolites have also been reported. The human microbiota consists of trillions of microorganisms comprising six major phyla. Among them, Firmicutes contributes the most to the metabolite profile. The peptide portion of Firmicutes mainly displays antimicrobial activity, and because of the current global threat of antimicrobial resistance, this phylum can contribute enormously to this phenomenon. Current genomics and computational techniques make it possible, to a great extent, to identify novel metabolites from these bacteria. However, uncovering many bacterial metabolites from the human microbiota and use them against many fatal diseases for which antimicrobials are on the frontline of treatment. Furthermore, most species within these major phyla remain unexplored for metabolite isolation and characterization, leaving significant potential for discovering novel metabolites. Enhancing current techniques is essential for advancing microbiome research. Novel culture-based methods, improved genomic and computational tools, and refined chromatographic techniques are required to better identify metabolite-producing microbiota. Ethical and regulatory challenges must

also be addressed, such as biobank management and probiotic safety. Clinically, microbiome therapeutics, including prebiotics, probiotics, and microbiota transplants, are being developed to treat diseases and improve drug efficacy. Major challenges include identifying key microbial contributors to health and disease and designing targeted interventions despite individual microbiome variability. Future research should focus on defined microbial communities in gnotobiotic models, targeted bacterial interventions, metabolomics for functional metabolite identification, and advanced computational tools. In addition, current metabolomic techniques face significant challenges that limit our ability to link specific microbial metabolites to biological outcomes, mainly due to issues with detection sensitivity, incomplete metabolite annotation, and variability in sample preparation and analysis, which together hinder consistent identification and quantification of metabolites. Moreover, the dynamic nature of metabolite production, which is affected by factors such as diet, circadian rhythms, and disease, coupled with high inter-individual variability in the microbiome, complicates establishing clear causal relationships. While techniques such as mass spectrometry and NMR spectroscopy offer valuable insights, limitations such as ion suppression, matrix effects, and the inability to capture transient metabolite changes in single-time-point measurements often result in data that are difficult to interpret in terms of biological function. These technical constraints, alongside the complexity of host-microbe interactions and metabolic redundancy, underscore the need for more standardized protocols and integrative multi-omics approaches to better understand the roles of microbial metabolites in human health.

In this review, we carefully evaluated most of the human microbiota and specifically focused on their metabolites. We have previously analyzed the biological activities of peptides in depth. Here, we mentioned all the metabolites, both peptides and non-peptides, and provided a clear picture of the human microbiota. This information will not only help to find existing metabolites in the human microbiota but will also serve as a tool for the discovery of new and novel metabolites from these microbes, which can ultimately lead to the discovery of future breakthrough products and save millions of people around the world.

Data Availability

No datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Received: 12 December 2024; Accepted: 28 April 2025;

Published online: 08 May 2025

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Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the Bio and Medical Technology Development Program of the National Research Foundation (NRF), funded by the Korean government (MSIT) (No. RS-2024-00352229), and the National Research Foundation (NRF) of Korea (NRF-2021R1A2C1004958 and NRF-2022R1A4A3022401).

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Conceptualization and writing of the original draft: A.B.S. Formal analysis and investigation: C.H. Writing, editing, supervision, and funding: S.H.S. All the authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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