



The Microbiome in Cancer

Anqi Lin^{1#}, Mingying Xiong^{2#}, Aimin Jiang^{3#}, Lihaoyun Huang^{2#}, Hank Z.H. Wong^{4#}, Suyin Feng^{5#}, Chunyan Zhang², Yu Li², Li Chen⁶, Hao Chi^{7,8}, Pengpeng Zhang⁹, Bicheng Ye¹⁰, Hengguo Zhang¹¹, Nan Zhang¹², Lingxuan Zhu², Weiming Mou², Junyi Shen², Kailai Li², Wentao Xu², Haoxuan Ying², Cangang Zhang¹³, Dongqiang Zeng^{14,15}, Jindong Xie¹⁶, Xinpei Deng¹⁷, Qi Wang¹⁸, Jianying Xu¹⁹, Wenjie Shi²⁰, Chang Qi²¹, Chunrun Qu²², Xufeng Huang^{23,24}, András Hajdu²³, Chaoqun Li²⁵, Changmin Peng²⁶, Xuanye Cao²⁷, Guangsheng Pei²⁸, Lin Zhang²⁹, Yujia Huo²⁹, Jiabao Xu³⁰, Antonino Glaviano³¹, Attila Gábor Szöllősi³², Sicheng Bian³³, Zhengrui Li³⁴⁺, Hailin Tang¹⁶⁺, Bufu Tang³⁵⁺, Zaoqu Liu³⁶⁺, Jian Zhang²⁺, Kai Miao^{6,37+}, Quan Cheng^{38,39*}, Ting Wei^{2*}, Shuofeng Yuan^{40,41*}, Peng Luo^{1,41*}

¹Donghai County People's Hospital (Affiliated Kangda College of Nanjing Medical University), Lianyungang, China; Department of Oncology, Zhujiang Hospital, Southern Medical University, Guangzhou 510282, China

²Department of Oncology, Zhujiang Hospital, Southern Medical University, Guangzhou 510282, China

³Department of Urology, Changhai hospital, Naval Medical University (Second Military Medical University), Shanghai 200433, China

⁴Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR 999077, China

⁵Donghai County People's Hospital (Affiliated Kangda College of Nanjing Medical University), Lianyungang 222000, China

³⁸Department of Neurosurgery, Xiangya Hospital, Central South University, Changsha 410008, China

³⁹National Clinical Research Center for Geriatric Disorders, Xiangya Hospital, Central South University, Changsha 410008, China

⁴⁰Department of Infectious Disease and Microbiology, The University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital, Shenzhen 518053, China

⁴¹Department of Microbiology, State Key Laboratory of Emerging Infectious Diseases, Carol Yu Centre for Infection, School of Clinical Medicine, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR 999077, China



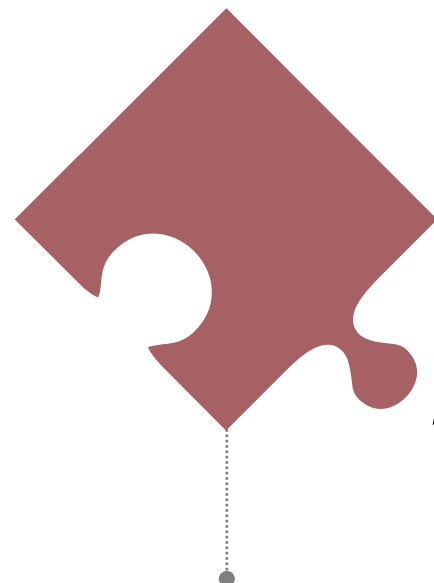
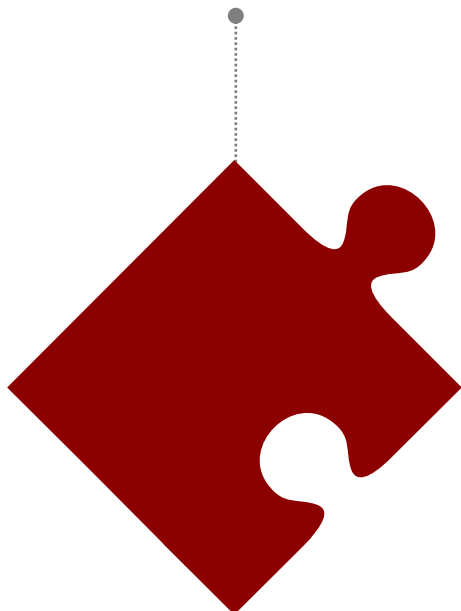
Anqi Lin, Mingying Xiong, Aimin Jiang, Lihaoyun Huang, Hank Z.H. Wong, Suyin Feng, Chunyan Zhang, *et al.* 2025. The microbiome in cancer. *iMeta* 4: e70070. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imt2.70070>



Introduction

Microorganisms promote the occurrence and development of tumors

- Gut microbiome
- Intratumor microbes
- Microorganisms in various organ tumors



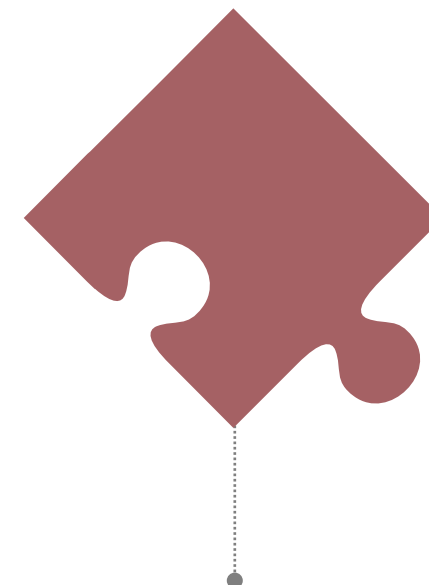
The Microbiome in Cancer

The microbiome can be used as a biomarker for diagnosis and prognosis

- Early Diagnosis
- Assessment of prognosis
- Prediction of efficacy

Microorganisms influence treatment effectiveness

- Chemotherapy
- Radiation therapy
- Immunotherapy
- Targeted Therapy
- Surgical treatment



Therapies targeting microbes are recognized as effective for anticancer effects

- Probiotics, prebiotics, and synbiotics
- Fecal microbiota transplantation
- Antibiotics
- Diet
- Microbial-targeted Drugs
- Oncolytic virus
- Engineered bacteria
- Fungal treatment



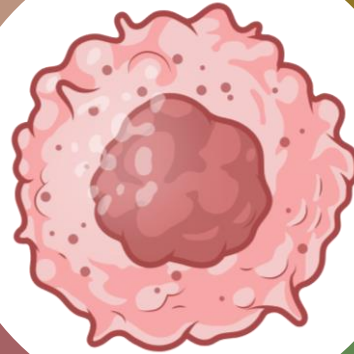
Gut microbiome and tumorigenesis

Bacteria (Table 1)

- **Beneficial bacterium:** Most reduce the risk of cancer.
- **Pathogenic bacterium:** Most can accelerate cancer progression; Abnormal proliferation can be involved in the process of carcinogenesis.

Virus (Table 2)

- **Oncogenic viruses:** Induce damage to genetic material and promote dysregulation of the microbiota.
- **Bacteriophages:** Affect the progression of cancer and interact with cancer cells.
- **Other viruses:** Directly or indirectly involved in tumor development.



Fungus (Table 3)

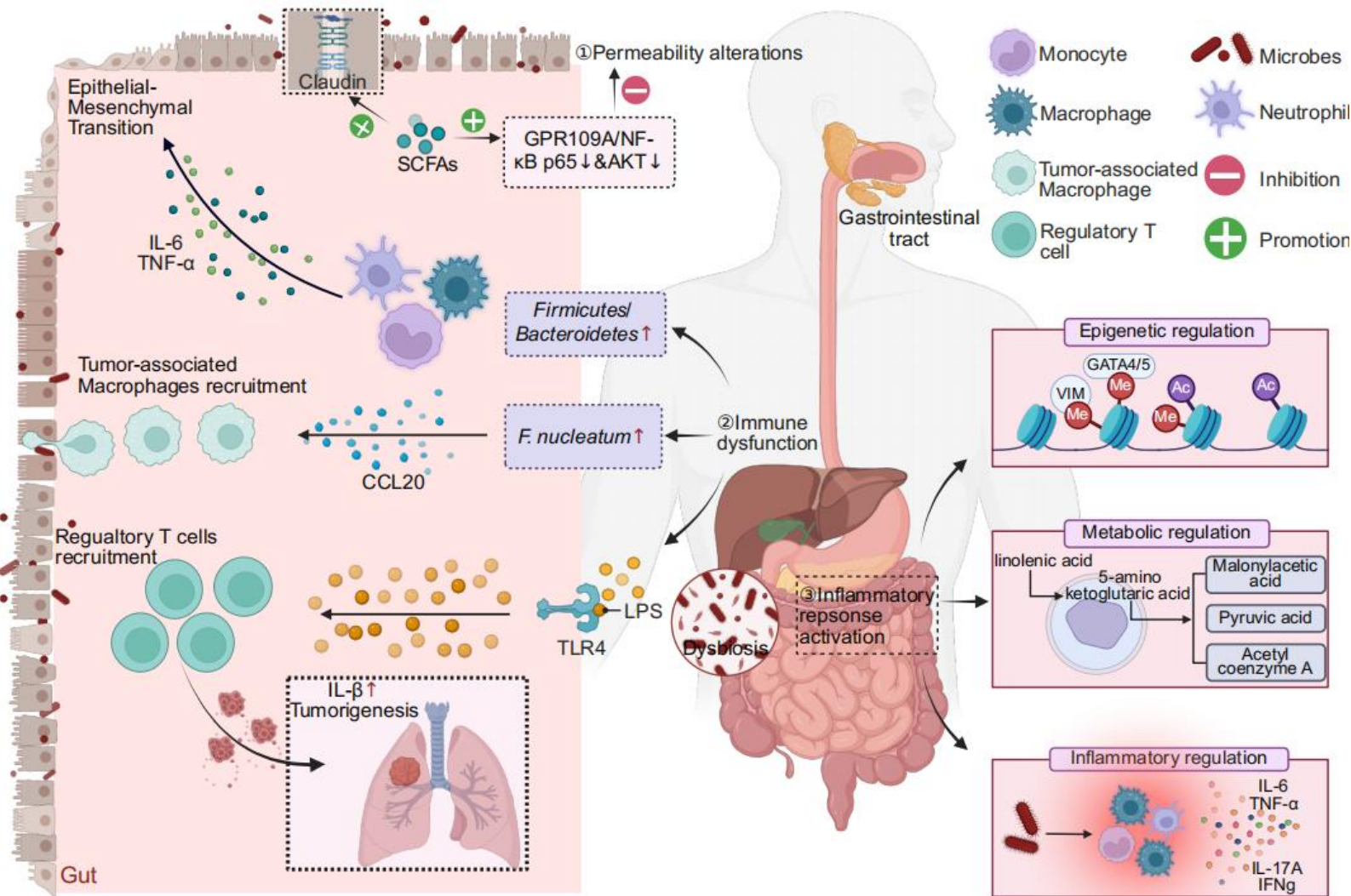
- **Symbiotic fungi:** The imbalance of symbiotic fungi promotes the occurrence and development of digestive system tumors.
 - Regulate the host immune microenvironment
 - Interaction with bacteria
- **Pathogenic fungi:** Specific pathogenic fungi were significantly enriched in multiple cancers.

Microbial metabolite (Table 4)

- **Short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs):** Affect tumor progression through multiple molecular mechanisms; regarded as a potential target for cancer treatment.
- **Secondary bile acids:** Play a role in promoting or inhibiting cancer.
- **Tryptophan metabolites:** Closely related to the changes of intestinal barrier function.



Gut microbiome and tumorigenesis



Permeability alterations & microbes entry

- Promote the **translocation of intestinal flora**
- Induce the **inflammatory cascade**
- Increase exposure to **carcinogens**

Immune dysfunction

- **Proinflammatory factors:** Promote epithelial-mesenchymal transition
- **Chemokine CCL20:** Recruit tumor-associated macrophages
- **Gut-lung axis:** The cross-organ immune response

Inflammatory response activation

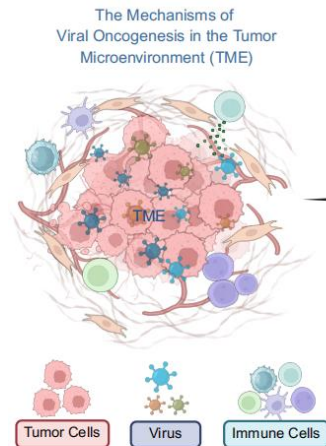
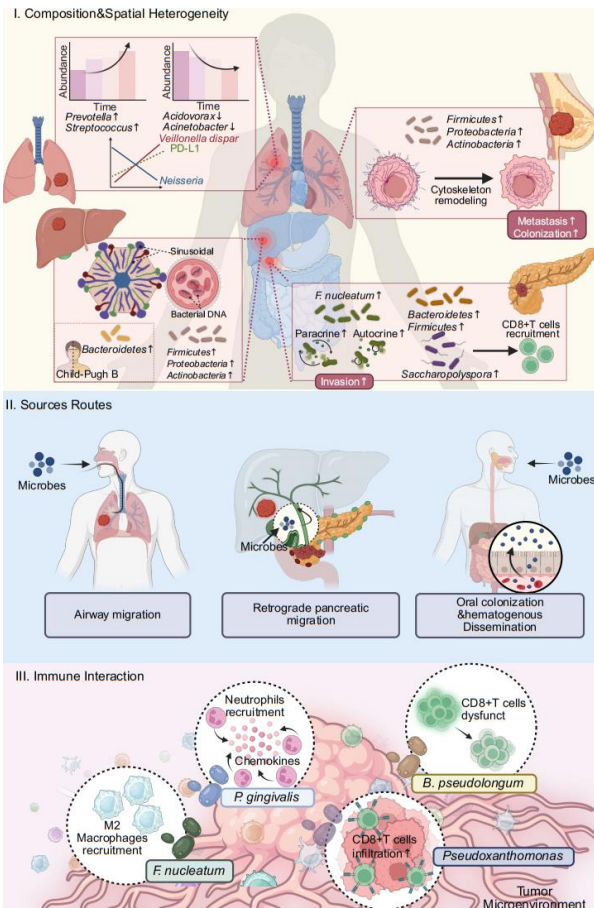
- Altering **epigenetic mechanisms**
- Regulating **metabolic pathways**
- Regulating the levels of **proinflammatory factors**



Tumor-associated microbiome

Intratumor microbes are involved in carcinogenesis

- Bacterial community composition was heterogeneous
- Bacteria interact with the tumor microenvironment

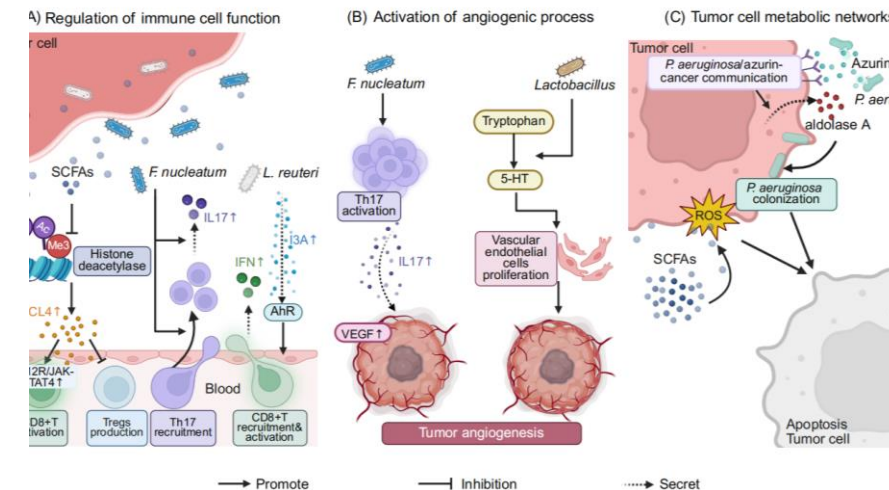


Intratumoral virus promotes tumor development

- Specific patterns of infection
- Genome modification
- Mechanisms of immune escape

Intratumoral fungi are involved in tumor progression

- Specific distribution of fungi
- Interaction between fungi and tumor immune microenvironment
- Fungi mediate metabolic reprogramming of tumors



Microbial metabolites can influence tumor fate

- Regulating immune cell function
- Involved in the angiogenic process
- Regulating tumor cell metabolism



Organ-specific microbiome and tumors

oral cavity

- Imbalance of the **oral microbiome**
- **Bacteria:** Specific bacteria proliferate abnormally
 - **Virus:** HPV infection
- **Fungi:** Colonization of fungi
- **Microbial metabolites**

Skin

- Dysregulation of the **microbiome**
 - **UV:** Radiation alters microbes
 - **Virus:** Virus infection
- Microbes mediate the **inflammatory response**
- Microbiome influences **immunotherapy**

Other Organs

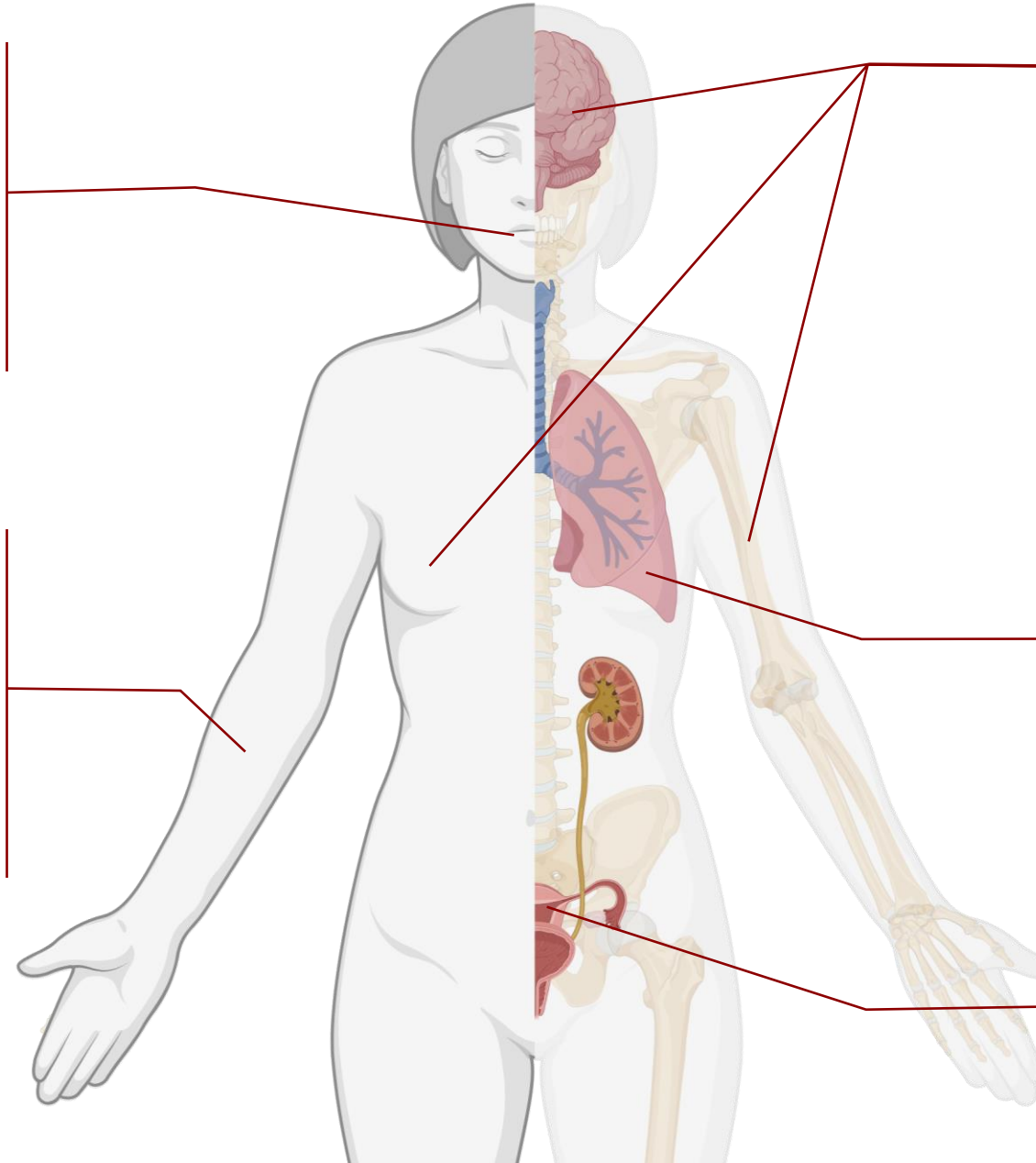
- Imbalance of the breast microbiome → **Breast cancer**
- Alterations of the brain microbiome → **Brain tumors**
- Bone marrow microbiome → **Hematological malignancies**

Respiratory system

- Imbalance of the **microbiota**
- **Specific microbiota:** Promote lung cancer progression
- The microbiome regulates the **tumor immune microenvironment**
- Microbiome modulates the **prognosis** of lung cancer

Urogenital system

- Imbalance of gut microbiota homeostasis → **bladder cancer**
- Specific bacterial infections → **Prostate cancer**
- HPV → **Cervical cancer**
- Microbiome → **Antineoplastic therapy**
- Microbiome markers → **Prognosis** in urologic tumors





Microbiome in tumor diagnosis

Microbiome markers

(Table 6)

Markers of bacteria

- Specific flora
- Indicators of bacterial diversity
- Bacterial metabolites

Viral markers

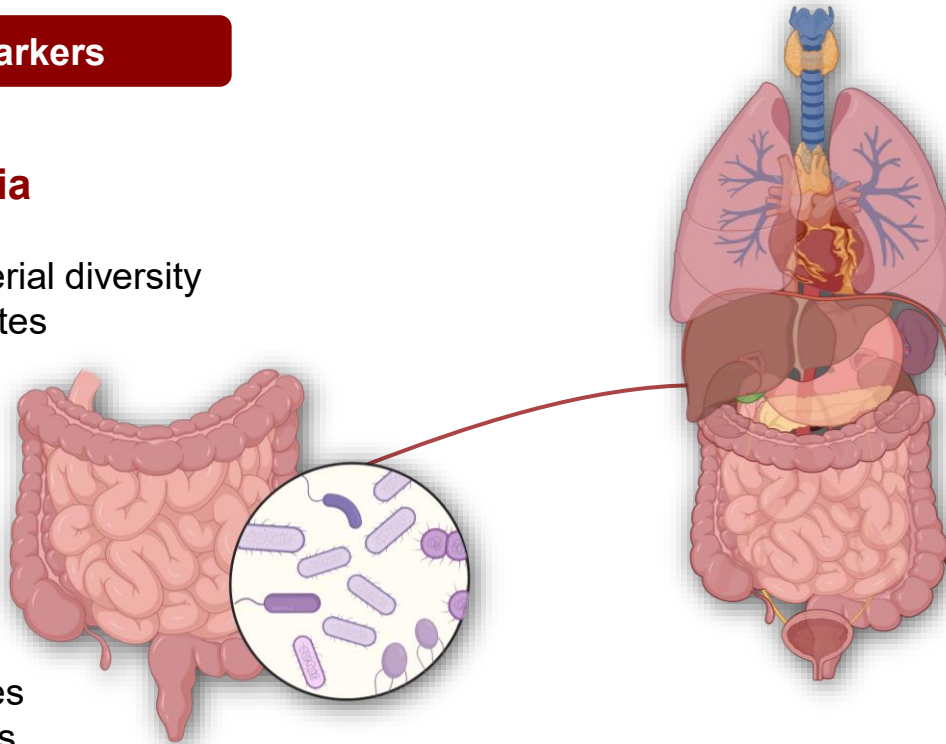
- Viral infection indicators
- Viral load
- Antigen of virus

Fungal markers

- Characteristics of fungal communities
- Fungal metabolites

Microbial metabolite markers

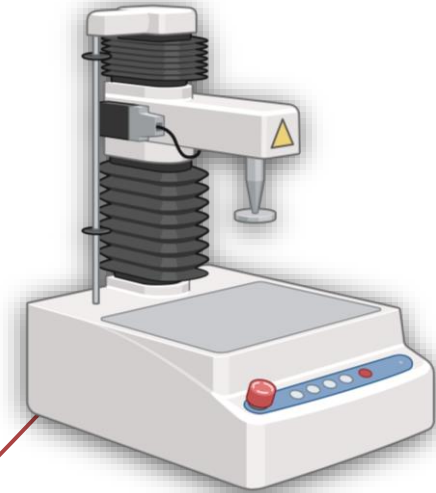
Inflammation-related markers



Organ specific microbes

(Table 7)

- Oral microbial markers
- Skin microbial markers
- Urinary microbial markers
- Respiratory Microbial markers

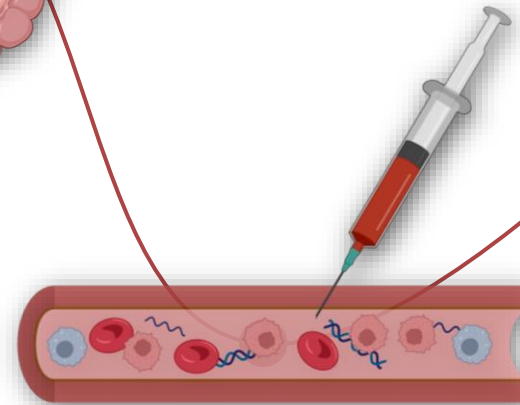


Standardization of microbiome diagnostics

- Specification of sample collection and processing
- Standardization of detection methods

Liquid biopsy and microbiome markers

- Circulating Microbial DNA
- Microbial-derived exosomes





Microbiome and cancer prognosis & efficacy



Microbiome and cancer prognosis

- Diversity of Microorganisms
- Specific microbial species
- Microbial metabolites

o o o o o

AND

(Table 8)



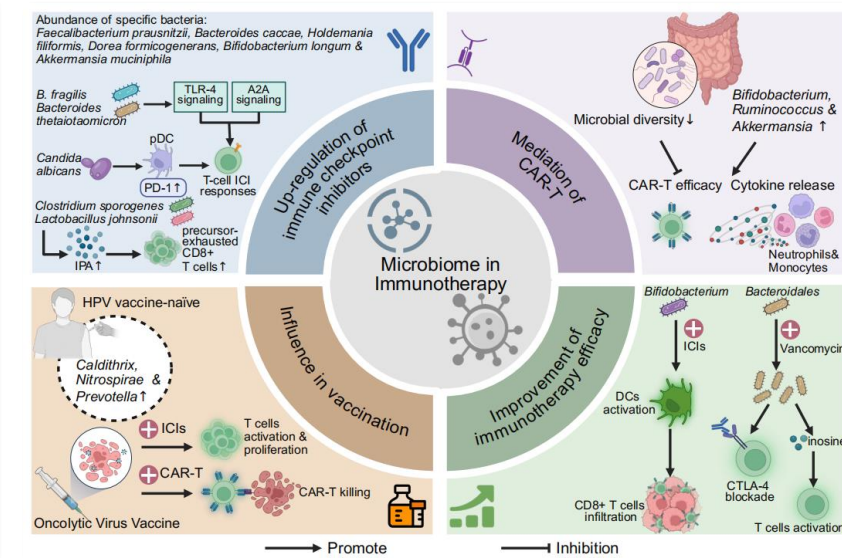
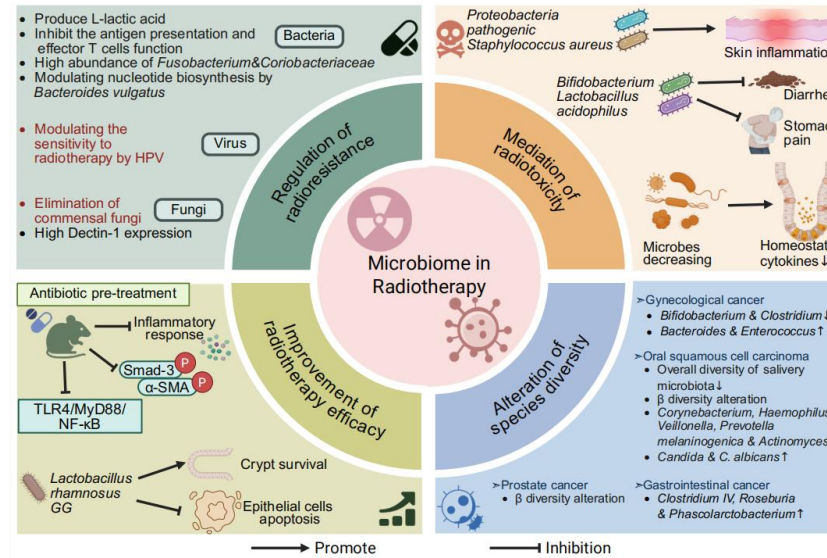
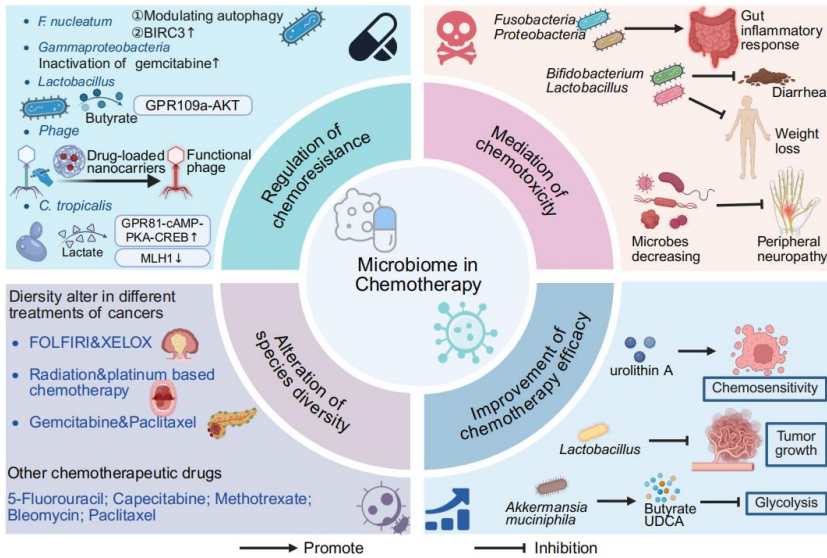
The microbiome and cancer response

- Efficacy
- Drug resistance
- Adverse reactions

o o o o o



Microbiology and cancer therapy



Microbiome and targeted therapies

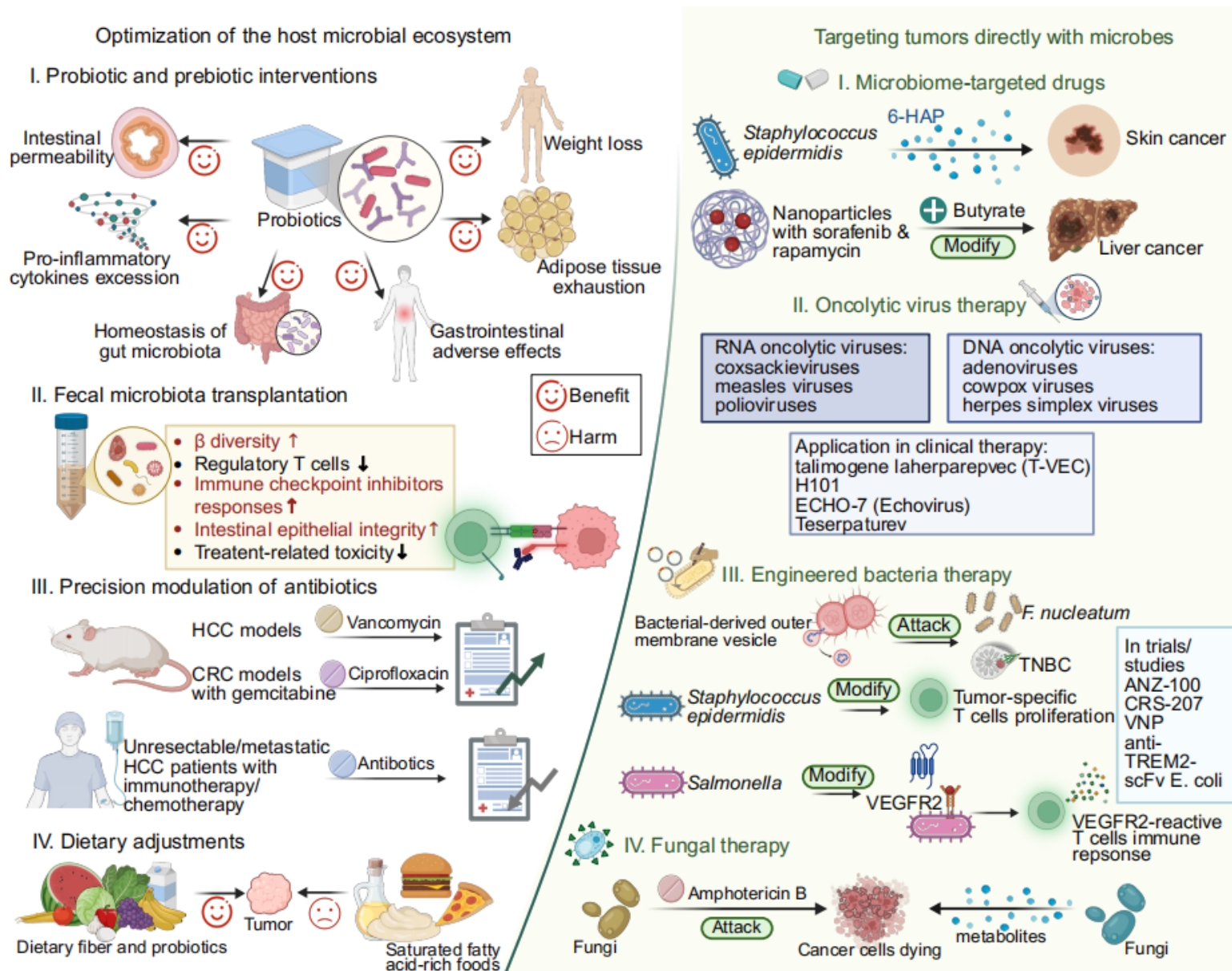
- Influence on efficacy
- Affecting drug resistance
- Targeted therapy strategies combined with microbiome intervention

Microbiome and surgical treatment

- Preoperative microbiome preparation
- Surgical stress affects the host microbiome
- Microbiome affects postoperative complications
- Microbiome regulation promotes recovery



Microbiology and cancer therapy



Host microbial ecosystem optimization

- Probiotic, prebiotic and synbiotic
- Gut Microbiota Transplantation (FMT)
- Regulation of antibiotics
- Regulation of diet

Microbes directly target tumors

- Microbiome-targeted drugs
- Oncolytic viral therapy
- Engineered Bacterial Therapy
- Fungal treatment strategies



Development and innovation in microbiome research

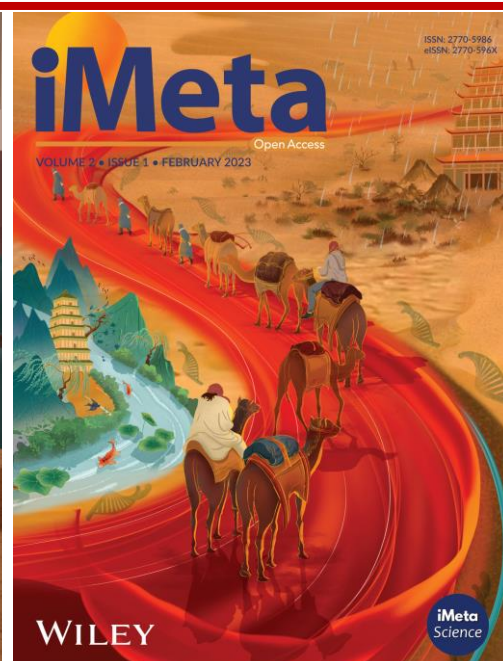


- **Technology**: Development and innovation of microbiome research technology
- **Mechanism**: In-depth exploration of the mechanism of microbiome action
- **Precision therapy**: Development of precision microbiome therapeutic strategies
- **Combination therapy**: Optimization of microbiome combination therapy strategies
- **Clinical translation**: Advancing translational clinical research
- **Quality control**: Microbiome product development and regulation
- **Cutting-edge research**: Prospect of frontier research direction
- **Novel microbe**: New directions for microbiome research

Anqi Lin, Mingying Xiong, Aimin Jiang, Lihaoyun Huang, Hank Z.H. Wong, Suyin Feng, Chunyan Zhang, *et al.* 2025. The microbiome in cancer. *iMeta* 4: e70070. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imt2.70070>

iMeta: To be top journals in biology and medicine

WILEY



“***iMeta***” launched in 2022 by iMeta Science Society, **impact factor (IF) 33.2**, ranking **top 65/22249 in world and 2/161 in the microbiology**. It aims to publish innovative and high-quality papers with broad and diverse audiences. **Its scope is similar to *Cell*, *Nature Biotechnology*/*Methods*/*Microbiology*/*Medicine*/*Food***. Its unique features include video abstract, bilingual publication, and social media with 600,000 followers. Indexed by **SCIE/ESI**, **PubMed**, **Google Scholar** etc.

“***iMetaOmics***” launched in 2024, with a **target IF>10**, and its scope is similar to ***Nature Communications*, *Cell Reports*, *Microbiome*, *ISME J*, *Nucleic Acids Research*, *Briefings in Bioinformatics***, etc.

“***iMetaMed***” launched in 2025, with a **target IF>15**, similar to ***Med*, *Cell Reports Medicine*, *eBioMedicine*, *eClinicalMedicine*** etc.



Society: <http://www.imeta.science>

Publisher: <https://wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/imeta>

iMeta: <https://wiley.atyponrex.com/journal/IMT2>

Submission: iMetaOmics: <https://wiley.atyponrex.com/journal/IMO2>

iMetaMed: <https://wiley.atyponrex.com/journal/IMM3>



[iMetaScience](#)



[iMetaScience](#)



office@imeta.science

imetaomics@imeta.science



[Promotion Video](#)

Update
2025/7/6