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Summary

The role of microbiota in MASLD: Basic science and clinical perspective

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The gut microbiome influences metabolic liver disease through mechanisms including loss of microbial diversity, production of alcohol and inflammatory mediators, and alterations in bile acid and short-chain fatty acid metabolism, with emerging but mixed evidence for therapeutic manipulation via probiotics and fecal microbiota transplantation.

KEY POINTS

- Patients with metabolic liver disease lose gut microbial diversity, leading to overgrowth of pathogenic bacteria such as E. coli, Enterobacter, and Klebsiella
- The speaker reported that Klebsiella pneumoniae was identified in 61% of individuals with steatohepatitis versus 6% in healthy individuals, and that this bacterium can produce alcohol even in abstinent individuals
- Approximately 2000 bile acids are now known, and the speaker stated that secondary bile acids such as hyodeoxycholic acid are depleted in MASLD patients and were preventive in preclinical models
- A network analysis of 37 randomized controlled trials with over 1900 participants showed reduction in liver enzymes and liver stiffness with probiotics or prebiotics versus placebo, but the INSIGHT trial of 104 adults treated with a symbiotic for approximately one year showed no significant benefit in liver fat or stiffness
- The speaker is conducting the PROMISE trial, a two-year double-blind placebo-controlled study of encapsulated FMT in cirrhosis patients, examining time to infection and decompensation as clinical endpoints

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