Translational pig model for microbiota management and its effects on intestinal health

Mark Bouwens, Stéphanie Vastenhouw, Frank Harders, Jan Cornelissen, Marga van Setten, Helmi Schokker, Annemarie Rebel, Alex Bossers, Nortert Stockhofe, Astrid de Greeff

Results

in vivo study

A decrease in il6 gene expression, but not in other immune genes, was observed in ileum, but no other intestinal part (figure 3).

Objective

To demonstrate the relevance of pig models for human intervention strategies we performed an intervention study in piglets, and assessed responses to human probiotics in vivo and in vitro

Methods in vivo study

The effect of two probiotics, Lactobacillus plantarum and Lactabacillus casei were compared to placebo treatment. Three groups of six 6 week old piglets were treated daily with probiotics for a period of 8 consecutive days, after which they were killed. At necropsy, different locations of the GI tract were sampled for evaluation of epithelial integrity, microbiota composition, and transcriptional host responses.

Methods in vitro study

To evaluate whether probiotics can affect disease outcome, an in vitro model using porcine intestinal cells (IPEC) was used. IPEC cells were treated with L. plantarum, and subsequently challenged with an E. coli strain (ETEC) (figure 4).

Results in vivo study

Administration of probiotics to pigs increased microbiota quantity (figure 2A), and induced changes in microbiota composition (figure 2B) and diversity (figure 2C). Both probiotic isolates induced these differences, but the treatment groups could be discriminated based on their microbiome, indicating that both strains induced differential effects.

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Conclusions

• Administration of probiotics to pigs induce changes in microbiota composition and immune gene expression.
• In vitro results indicate that probiotics affect the immune responses induced by E. coli. These responses are comparable to probiotic effects of dampening the proinflammatory immune response in humans.

Pigs are very suitable as translational models to study human intestinal health due to their comparable anatomy, intestinal microbiota, nutritional requirements, and inflammatory responses. New pig studies will be performed where the ameliorating effect of probiotics will be studied in vivo. In addition, the immune responses will be studied more extensively by including flow cytometry analyses of gut and serum immune cells, and more comprehensive cytokine profile analyses.