

Gut flora study gives insight into obesity

July 20 2010

A UQ academic's research into whether nature or nurture influences the development of gut flora has been published in *Nature* and may hold the key to understanding obesity.

Dr Florent Angly said the fundamental research was significant since some forms of obesity could be caused by the action of microbiota.

“It is necessary to include phages, or viral predators, in the discussion of microbial communities to get an accurate understanding of how gut flora complements the digestive process.

“This study represents an early step in this direction.

“In the future, it is very likely that our improved understanding of the viral and [microbial communities](#) residing in our guts will result in better, personalised dietary advice or the creation of nutritional complements such as pro-biotics to improve our health and wellbeing,” Dr Angly said.

Dr Angly, a Postdoctoral Research Fellow from UQ's Advanced Water Management Centre (AWMC), was part of a team based in California who studied viral (phage) communities in the digestive tracts of mothers and their twin children.

Dr Angly said the study showed [environmental factors](#) largely shaped viral gut flora, as twins displayed large inter-personal variations.

“Twins have an identical genome, so including twins in the study was

designed to find out what is more important to determine [gut flora](#), nature (the genome of an individual), or nurture (one's health and dietary habits).

Dr Gene Tyson, Senior Research Fellow at the Advanced Water Management Centre, said Dr Angly was an extremely talented researcher and this publication represented another significant contribution to the field of [microbial ecology](#).

“Dr Angly joined my group in the AWMC in January and will be our first postdoctoral researcher in a new centre dedicated to environmental genomics and microbial ecology, the Australian Centre for Microbial Systems Ecology,” Dr Tyson said.

More information: The abstract is online at:
www.nature.com/nature/journal/...abs/nature09199.html

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: Gut flora study gives insight into obesity (2010, July 20) retrieved 9 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-07-gut-flora-insight-obesity.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.
