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The gut microbiome regulates memory function

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Abstract:

Emerging evidence highlights a critical relationship between gut microbiota and neurocognitive development. Here we explore whether excessive early life consumption of added sugars negatively impacts neurocognitive development via the gut microbiome. Using a rodent model of sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption during adolescence, we show that excessive early life sugar intake impairs adult hippocampal-dependent memory function while preserving other neurocognitive domains. Adolescent SSB consumption during adolescence also elevates fecal microbial abundance of *Parabacteroides*, which negatively correlates with memory task performance. Transferred enrichment of *Parabacteroides* species *P. distasonis* and *P. johnsonii* in adolescent rats impairs memory function during adulthood. Hippocampus transcriptome analyses identify gene expression alterations in neurotransmitter synaptic signaling, intracellular kinase signaling, metabolic function, neurodegenerative disease, and dopaminergic synaptic signaling-associated pathways as potential mechanisms linking bacterial alterations with memory impairment. Collectively these results identify a role for microbiota "dysbiosis" in mediating the negative effects of early life unhealthy dietary factors on neurocognitive outcomes.

Introduction:

The gut microbiome has recently been implicated in modulating neurocognitive development and consequent functioning [1,2]. Early life developmental periods represent critical windows for the impact of indigenous gut microbes on the brain, as evidenced by the reversal of behavioral and neurochemical abnormalities in germ free rodents when inoculated with conventional microbiota during early life, but not during adulthood [3-5]. Dietary factors are a critical determinant of gut microbiota diversity and can alter gut bacterial communities, as evident from the microbial plasticity observed in response to pre- and probiotic treatment, as well as the "dysbiosis" resulting from consuming unhealthy, yet palatable foods that are associated with obesity and metabolic disorders (e.g., "Western diet"; foods high in saturated fatty acids and added sugar) [6]. In addition to altering the gut microbiota, consumption of these dietary factors yields long-lasting memory impairments, and these effects are more pronounced when consumed during early life developmental periods vs. during adulthood [7-9]. Whether diet-induced changes in specific bacterial populations are functionally related to altered early life neurocognitive outcomes, however, is poorly understood.

The hippocampus, which is well known for its role in spatial and episodic memory and more recently for regulating learned and social aspects of food intake control [10-15], is particularly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of Western dietary factors [16-18]. During the juvenile and adolescent stages of development, a time when the brain is rapidly developing, consumption of diets high in saturated fat and sugar [19-21] or sugar alone [22-25] impairs hippocampal function while in some cases preserving memory processes that do

not rely on the hippocampus. While several putative underlying mechanisms have been

investigated, the precise biological pathways linking dietary factors to neurocognitive

dysfunction remain largely undetermined [9]. Here we aimed to determine whether sugar-

induced alterations in gut microbiota during early life are causally related to

hippocampal-dependent memory impairments observed during adulthood.

<u>Methods and Materials:</u>

Experimental Subjects

Juvenile male Sprague Dawley rats (Envigo; arrival post natal day (PN) 26-28; 50-70g)

were housed individually in standard conditions with a 12:12 light/dark cycle. All rats

had ad libitum access to water and Lab Diet 5001 (PMI Nutrition International,

Brentwood, MO; 29.8 % kcal from protein, 13.4% kcal from fat, 56.7% kcal from

carbohydrate), with modifications where noted. All experiments were performed in

accordance with the approval of the Animal Care and Use Committee at the University

of Southern California.

Experiment 1

Twenty one juvenile male rats (PN 26-28) were divided into two groups with equal body

weight and given ad libitum access to: 1) 11% weight-by-volume (w/v) solution

containing monosaccharide ratio of 65% fructose and 35% glucose in reverse osmosis-

filtered water (SUG; n=11) or 2) or an extra bottle of reverse osmosis-filtered water

(CTL; n=10). This solution was chosen to model commonly consumed sugar-sweetened

beverages in humans in terms of both caloric content and monosaccharide ratio[26].

Additionally, all rats were given ad libitum access to water and standard rat chow. Food

intake, solution intake and body weights were monitored thrice weekly except where

prohibited due to behavioral testing. At PN 60, rats underwent Novel Object in Context

(NOIC) testing, to measure hippocampal-dependent episodic contextual memory. At PN

67 rats underwent anxiety-like behavior testing in the Zero Maze, followed by body

composition testing at PN 70 and an intraperitoneal glucose tolerance test (IP GTT) at

PN 84. All behavioral procedures were run at the same time each day (4-6 hours into the

light cycle). Fecal and cecal samples were collected prior to sacrifice at PN 104.

In a separate cohort of juvenile male rats (n=6/group) animals were treated as above,

but on PN day 60 rats were tested in the Novel Object Recognition (NOR) and Open

Field (OF) tasks, with two days in between tasks. Animals were sacrificed and tissue

punches were collected from the dorsal hippocampus on PN day 65. Tissue punches

were flash frozen in isopentane packed in dry ice and stored at -80°C until further

analyses.

Experiment 2

Twenty-three juvenile male rats (PN 26-28) were divided into two groups and received a

gavage twice daily (12 hours apart) for 7 days (only one treatment was given on day 7) of

either (1) saline (SAL; n=8), or (2) a cocktail of antibiotics consisting of Vancomycin (50

mg/kg), Neomycin (100 mg/kg), and Metronidazole (100 mg/kg) along with

supplementation with 1 mg/mL of ampicillin in their drinking water (ABX; n=15), which

is a protocol modified from [27]. Animals were housed in fresh, sterile cages on Day 3 of

the antibiotic or saline treatment, and again switched to fresh sterile cages on Day 7

after the final gavage. All animals were maintained on sterile, autoclaved water and chow for the remainder of the experiment. Rats in the ABX group were given water instead of ampicillin solution on Day 7. Animals in the ABX group were further subdivided to receive either gavage of a 1:1 ratio of *Parabacteroides distasonis* and *Parabacteroides johnsonii* (PARA; n=8) or saline (SAL; n=7) thirty six hours after the last ABX treatment. To minimize potential contamination, rats were handled minimally for 14 days. Cage changes occurred once weekly at which time animals and food were weighed. Experimenters wore fresh, sterile PPE and weigh boxes were cleaned with sterilizing solution in between each cage change. On PN 50 rats were tested in NOIC, on PN 60 rats were tested in NOR, on PN 62 rats were tested in the Zero Maze, followed by Open Field on PN 64. On PN 73 rats were given an IP GTT, and on PN 76 body composition was tested. Rats were sacrificed at PN 83 and dorsal hippocampus tissue punches were collected on PN day 65. Tissue punches were flash frozen in isopentane packed in dry ice and stored at -80°C until further analyses.

IP glucose tolerance test (IP GTT)

Animals were food restricted 24 hours prior to IP GTT. Immediately prior to the test, baseline blood glucose readings were obtained from tail tip and recorded by a blood glucose meter (One touch Ultra2, LifeScan Inc., Milpitas, CA). Each animal was then intraperitoneally (IP) injected with dextrose solution (0.923g/ml by body weight) and tail tip blood glucose readings were obtained at 30, 60, 90, and 120 min after IP injections, as previously described [22].

Zero Maze

The Zero Maze is an elevated circular track (63.5 cm fall height, 116.8cm outside

diameter), divided into four equal length sections. Two sections were open with 3 cm

high curbs, whereas the 2 other closed sections contained 17.5 cm high walls. Animals

are placed in the maze facing the open section of the track in a room with ambient

lighting for 5 min while the experimenter watches the animal from a monitor outside of

the room. The experimenter records the total time spent in the open sections (defined as

the head and front two paws in open arms), and the number of crosses into the open

sections from the closed sections.

Novel object in context task (NOIC)

NOIC measures episodic contextual memory based on the capacity for an animal to

identify which of two familiar objects it has never seen before in a specific context.

Procedures were adapted from prior reports [28, 29]. Briefly, rats are habituated to two

distinct contexts on subsequent days (with the habituation order counterbalanced by

group) for 5-min sessions: Context 1 is a semi-transparent box (15in W x 24in L x 12in

H) with orange stripes and Context 2 is a grey opaque box (17in W x 17in L x 16in H)

(Context identify assignments counterbalanced by group), each context is in a separate

dimly lit room, which is obtained using two desk lamps pointed toward the floor . Day 1

of NOIC begins with each animal being placed in Context 1 containing two distinct

similarly sized objects placed in opposite corners: a 500ml jar filled with blue water

(Object A) and a square glass container (Object B) (Object assignments and placement

counterbalanced by group). On day 2 of NOIC, animals are placed in Context 2 with

duplicates of one of the objects. On NOIC day 3, rats are placed in Context 2 with

Objects A and Object B. One of these objects is not novel to the rat, but its placement in

Context 2 is novel. All sessions are 5 minutes long and are video recorded. Each time the

rat is placed in one of the contexts, it is placed with its head facing away from both

objects. The time spent investigating each object is recorded from the video recordings

by an experimenter who is blinded to the treatment groups. Exploration is defined as

sniffing or touching the object with the nose or forepaws. The task is scored by

calculating the time spent exploring the Novel Object to the context divided by the time

spent exploring both Objects A and B combined, which is the novelty or "discrimination

index". Rats with an intact hippocampus will preferentially investigate the object that is

novel to Context 2, given that this object is a familiar object yet is now presented in a

novel context, whereas hippocampal inactivation impairs the preferential investigation

of the object novel to Context 2 [28].

Novel Object Recognition

The apparatus used for NOR is a grey opaque box (17in W x 17in L x 16in H) placed in a

dimly lit room, which is obtained using two desk lamps pointed toward the floor.

Procedures are adapted from [30]. Rats are habituated to the empty arena and conditions

for 10 minutes on the day prior to testing. The novel object and the side on which the

novel object is placed is counterbalanced by group. The test begins with a 5-minute

familiarization phase, where rats are placed in the center of the arena, facing away from

the objects, with two identical copies of the same object to explore. The objects were

either two identical cans or two identical bottles, counterbalanced by treatment group.

The objects were chosen based on preliminary studies which determined that they are

equally preferred by Sprague Dawley rats. Animals are then removed from the arena and

placed in the home cage for 5 minutes. The arena and objects are cleaned with 10%

ethanol solution, and one of the objects in the arena is replaced with a different one

(either the can or bottle, whichever the animal has not previously seen, i.e., the "novel

object"). Animals are again placed in the center of the arena and allowed to explore for 3

minutes. Time spent exploring the objects is recorded via video recording and analyzed

using Any-maze activity tracking software (Stoelting Co., Wood Dale, IL).

Open Field

Open field measures general activity level and also anxiety-like behavior in the rat. A

large gray bin, 60 cm (L) X 56 CM (W) is placed under diffuse even lighting (30 lux). A

center zone is identified and marked in the bin (19 cm L X 17.5 cm W). A video camera is

placed directly overhead and animals are tracked using AnyMaze Software (Stoelting

Co., Wood Dale, IL). Animals are placed in the center of the box facing the back wall and

allowed to explore the arena for 10 min while the experimenter watches from a monitor

in an adjacent room. The apparatus is cleaned with 10% ethanol after each rat is tested.

Body Composition

Body composition (body fat, lean mass) was measured using LF90 time domain nuclear

magnetic resonance (Bruker NMR minispec LF 90II, Bruker Daltonics, Inc.).

Bacterial transfer

Parabacteroides distasonis (ATCC 8503) was cultured under anaerobic conditions at

37C in Reinforced Clostridial Medium (RCM, BD Biosciences). *Parabacteroides*

johnsonii (DSM 18315) was grown in anaerobic conditions in PYG medium (modified,

DSM medium 104). Cultures were authenticated by full-length 16S rRNA gene

sequencing. For bacterial enrichment, 10^9 colony-forming units of both *P. distasonis*

and *P. johnsonii* were suspended in 500 uL pre-reduced PBS and orally gavaged into

antibiotic-treated rats. When co-administered, a ratio of 1:1 was used for *P. distasonis*

and *P. johnsonii*.

Gut microbiota DNA extraction and 16s rRNA gene sequencing in sugar-fed

and control rats

All samples were extracted and sequenced according to the guidelines and procedures

established by the Earth Microbiome Project [31]. DNA was extracted from fecal and cecal

samples using the MO BIO PowerSoil DNA extraction kit. PCR targeting the V4 region

of the 16S rRNA bacterial gene was performed with the 515F/806R primers, utilizing the

protocol described in Caporaso et al.[32]. Amplicons were barcoded and pooled in equal

concentrations for sequencing. The amplicon pool was purified with the MO BIO

UltraClean PCR Clean-up kit and sequenced by the 2 x 150bp MiSeq platform at the

Institute for Genomic Medicine at UCSD. All sequences were deposited in Qiita Study

11255 as raw FASTQ files. Sequences were demultiplexed using Qiime-1 based "split

libraries" with the forward reads only dropping. Demultiplexed sequences were then

trimmed evenly to 100 bp and 150 bp to enable comparison to other studies for meta

analyses. Trimmed sequences were matched to known OTUs at 97% identity.

Gut microbiota DNA extraction and 16S rRNA gene sequencing for

***Parabacteroides*-enriched and control rats**

Total bacterial genomic DNA was extracted from rat fecal samples (0.25 g) using the

Qiagen DNeasy PowerSoil Kit. The library was prepared following methods from

(Caporaso et al., 2011). The V4 region (515F-806R) of the 16S rDNA gene was PCR

amplified using individually barcoded universal primers and 30 ng of the extracted

genomic DNA. The conditions for PCR were as follows: 94°C for 3 min to denature the

DNA, with 35 cycles at 94°C for 45 s, 50°C for 60 s, and 72°C for 90 s, with a final

extension of 10 min at 72°C. The PCR reaction was set up in triplicate, and the PCR

products were purified using the Qiaquick PCR purification kit (QIAGEN). The purified

PCR product was pooled in equal molar concentrations quantified by nanodrop and

sequenced by Laragen, Inc. using the Illumina MiSeq platform and 2 x 250bp reagent

kit for paired-end sequencing. Amplicon sequence variants (ASVs) were chosen after

denoising with the Deblur pipeline. Taxonomy assignment and rarefaction were

performed using QIIME2-2019.10.

Hippocampal RNA extraction and sequencing

Hippocampi from rats treated with or without sugar or *Parabacteroides* were subject to

RNA-seq analysis. Total RNA was extracted according to manufacturer's instructions

using RNeasy Lipid Tissue Mini Kit (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany). Total RNA was checked

for degradation in a Bioanalyzer 2100 (Agilent, Santa Clara, CA, USA). Quality was very

high for all samples, and libraries were prepared from 1 ug of total RNA using a NuGen

Universal Plus mRNA-seq Library Prep Kit (Tecan Genomics Inc. Redwood City, CA).

Final library products were quantified using the Qubit 2.0 Fluorometer (Thermo Fisher

Scientific Inc., Waltham, MA, USA), and the fragment size distribution was determined

with the Bioanalyzer 2100. The libraries were then pooled equimolarly, and the final

pool was quantified via qPCR using the Kapa Biosystems Library Quantification Kit,

according to manufacturer's instructions. The pool was sequenced in an Illumina

NextSeq 550 platform (Illumina, San Diego, CA, USA), in Single-Read 75 cycles format,

obtaining about 25 million reads per sample. The preparation of the libraries and the

sequencing was performed at the USC Genome Core (http://uscgenomecore.usc.edu/)

RNA-seq quality control

Data quality checks were performed using the FastQC tool

(http://www.bioinformatics.babraham.ac.uk/projects/fastqc) and low quality reads

were trimmed with Trim_Galore

(http://www.bioinformatics.babraham.ac.uk/projects/trim_galore/). RNA-seq reads

passing quality control were mapped to *Rattus novegicus* transcriptome (Rnor6) and

quantified with Salmon [33]. Salmon directly mapped RNA-seq reads to Rat

transcriptome and quantified transcript counts. Txiimport [34] were used to convert

transcript counts into gene counts. Potential sample outliers were detected by principle

component analysis (PCA) and one control and one treatment sample from the

Parabacteroides experiment were deemed outliers (Figure S7A, B) and removed.

Identification of differentially expressed genes (DEGs)

DESeq2[35] were used to conduct differential gene expression analysis between sugar

treatment and the corresponding controls, or between *Parabacteroides* treatment and

the corresponding controls. Low-abundance genes were filtered out and only those

having a mean raw count > 1 in more than 50% of the samples were included.

Differentially expressed genes were detected by DESeq2 with default settings.

Significant DEGs were defined as Benjamini-Hochberg (BH) adjusted false discovery

rate (FDR) < 0.05. For heatmap visualization, genes were normalized with variance

stabilization transformation implemented in DESeq2, followed by calculating a z-score

for each gene.

Pathway analyses of DEGs

For the pathway analyses, DEGs at p-value < 0.01 was used. Pathway enrichment

analysis were conducted using enrichr[36] by intersecting each signature with pathways or

gene sets from KEGG[37], gene ontology biological pathways (GOBP), Cellular Component

(GOCP), Molecular Function (GOMF)[38] and Wikipathways[39]. Pathways at FDR < 0.05

were considered significant. Unless otherwise specified, R 3.5.2 was used for the

analysis mentioned in the RNA sequencing section.

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Additional Statistical methods

Data are presented as means ± SEM. For analytic comparisons of body weight, total food

intake, and chow intake, groups were compared using repeated measures ANOVA in

Prism software (GraphPad Inc., version 8.0). Taxonomic comparisons from 16S rRNA

sequencing analysis were analyzed by analysis of composition of microbiomes

(ANCOM). When significant differences were detected, Sidak post-hoc test for multiple

comparisons was used. Area under the curve (AUC) for the IP GTT testing was also

calculated using Prism. All other statistical analyses were performed using Student's

two-tailed unpaired t tests in excel software (Microsoft Inc., version 15.26). Normality

was confirmed prior to the utilization of parametric testing. For all analyses, statistical

significance was set at $P<0.05$.

<u>Results:</u>

Early-life sugar consumption impairs hippocampal-dependent memory

function

Results from the Novel Object in Context (NOIC) task, which measures hippocampal-

dependent episodic contextual memory function [29], reveal that while there were no

differences in total exploration time of the combined objects on days 1 or 3 of the task

(Figure 1A, B), animals fed sugar solutions in early life beginning at PN 28 had a

reduced capacity to discriminate an object that was novel to a specific context when

animals were tested during adulthood (PN 60), indicating impaired hippocampal

function (Figure 1C). Conversely, animals fed sugar solutions in early life performed

similarly to those in the control group when tested in the novel object recognition task

(NOR) (Figure 1D), which tests object recognition memory independent of context.

Notably, when performed using the current methods with a short duration between the

familiarization phase and the test phase, NOR not hippocampal-dependent but instead

is primarily dependent on the perirhinal cortex [29, 40-42]. These data suggest that early life

dietary sugar consumption impairs performance in hippocampal-dependent contextual-

based recognition memory without affecting performance in perirhinal cortex-

dependent recognition memory independent of context [22].

Elevated anxiety-like behavior and altered general activity levels may influence novelty

exploration independent of memory effects and may therefore confound the

interpretation of behavioral results. Thus, we next tested whether early life sugar

consumption affects anxiety-like behavior using two different tasks designed to measure

anxiety-like behavior in the rat: the elevated zero maze and the open field task, that

latter of which also assesses levels of general activity [43]. Early life sugar consumption

had no effect on time spent in the open area or in the number of open area entries in the

zero maze (Figure 1E, F). Similarly, early life sugar had no effect on distance travelled or

time spent in the center zone in the open field task (Figure 1G, H). Together these data

suggest that habitual early life sugar consumption did not increase anxiety-like behavior

or general activity levels in the rats.

Early life sugar consumption impairs glucose tolerance without affecting

total caloric intake, body weight, or adiposity

Given that excessive sugar consumption is associated with weight gain and metabolic

deficits [44], we tested whether access to a sugar solution during the adolescent phase of

development would affect food intake, body weight gain, adiposity, and glucose

tolerance in the rat. Early life sugar consumption had no effect on body composition

during adulthood (Figure 1I, Figure S1 A, B). Early life sugar consumption also had no

effect on body weight or total kcal intake (Figure 1J, K), which is in agreement with

previous findings [22, 45, 46]. Animals steadily increased their intake of the 11% sugar

solution throughout the study (Figure 1L) but compensated for the calories consumed in

the sugar solutions by reducing their intake of dietary chow (Figure S1 C). However,

animals that were fed sugar solutions during adolescence showed impaired peripheral

glucose metabolism in an intraperitoneal glucose tolerance test (IP GTT) (Figure S1D).

Gut microbiota are impacted by early life sugar consumption

Principal component analyses of 16s rRNA gene sequencing data of fecal samples

revealed a separation between the fecal microbiota of rats fed early life sugar and

controls (Figure 2A). Results from LEfSe analysis identified differentially abundant

bacterial taxa in fecal samples that were elevated by sugar consumption. These include

the family *Clostridiaceae* and the genus *02d06* within *Clostridiaceae*, the family

Mogibacteriaceae, the family *Enterobacteriaceae*, the order *Enterobacteriales*, the

class of *Gammaproteobacteria*, and the genus *Parabacteroides* within the family

Porphyromonadaceae (Figure 2B,C). In addition to an elevated % relative abundance of

the genus *Parabacteroides* in animals fed early life sugar (Figure 2D), log transformed

counts of the *Parabacteroides* negatively correlated with performance scores in the

NOIC memory task (Figure 2E). Within *Parabacteroides*, levels of two operational

taxonomic units (OTUs) that were elevated by sugar negatively correlated with

performance in the NOIC task, identified as taxonomically related to *P. johnsonii* and *P.*

distasonis (Figure 2F, G). The significant negative correlation between NOIC

performance and *Parabacteroides* was also present within each of the diet groups alone,

but when separated out by diet group only *P. distasonis* showed a significant negative

correlation for each diet group (P<.05), whereas *P. johnsonii* showed a non-significant

trend in both the control and sugar groups (P=.06, and P=.08, respectively; Figure S2A-

C). Abundance of other bacterial populations that were affected by sugar consumption

were not significantly related to memory task performance.

There was a similar separation between groups in bacteria analyzed from cecal

samples (Figure S3A). LEfSe results from cecal samples show elevated *Bacilli*,

Actinobacteria, *Erysipelotrichia*, and *Gammaproteobacteria* in rats fed early life sugar,

and elevated *Clostridia* in the controls (Figure S3B-C). Abundances at the different

taxonomic levels in fecal and cecal samples are shown in (Figure S4, S5). Regression

analyses did not identify these altered cecal bacterial populations as being significantly

correlated to NOIC memory performance.

Early life *Parabacteroides* enrichment impairs memory function

To determine whether neurocognitive outcomes due to early life sugar consumption

could be attributable to elevated levels of *Parabacteroides* in the gut, we experimentally

enriched the gut microbiota of naïve juvenile rats with two *Parabacteroides* species that

exhibited high 16S rRNA sequencing alignment with OTUs that were increased by sugar

consumption and were negatively correlated with behavioral outcomes in rats fed early

life sugar. *P. johnsonii* and *P. distasoni* species were cultured individually under

anaerobic conditions and transferred to a group of antibiotic-treated young rats in a 1:1

ratio via oral gavage using the experimental design described in Methods and outlined

in Figure 3A, and from [27]. To confirm *Parabacteroides* enrichment, 16SrRNA

sequencing was performed on rat fecal samples for SAL-SAL, ABX-SAL, and ABX-PARA

groups. Alpha diversity was analyzed using observed operational taxonomic units

(OTUs) (Figure 3B), where both ABX-SAL and ABX-PARA fecal samples have

significantly reduced alpha diversity when compared with SAL-SAL fecal samples,

suggesting that antibiotic treatment reduces microbiome alpha diversity. Further, either

treatment with antibiotics alone or antibiotics followed by *Parabacteroides* significantly

alters microbiota composition relative to the SAL-SAL group (Figure 3C). Taxonomic

comparisons from 16S rRNA sequencing analysis were analyzed by analysis of

composition of microbiomes (ANCOM). Differential abundance on relative abundance

at the species level (Figure 3D) was tested across samples hypothesis-free. Significant

taxa at the species level were corrected for using false-discovery rate (FDR)-corrected *P*-

values to calculate W in ANCOM. Comparing all groups resulted in the highest W value

of 144 for the *Parabacteroides* genus, which was enriched in ABX-PARA fecal samples

after bacterial gavage with an average relative abundance of 55.65% (Figure 3E). This

confirms successful *Parabacteroides* enrichment for ABX-PARA rats post-gavage when

compared to either ABX-SAL (average relative abundance of 5.47%) or ABX-SAL rats

(average relative abundance of 0.26%).

All rats treated with antibiotics showed a reduction in food intake and body

weight during the initial stages of antibiotic treatment, however, there were no

differences in body weight between the two groups of antibiotic treated animals by

PN50, at the time of behavioral testing (Figure S6A-C). Similar to a recent report [47],

Parabacteroides enrichment in the present study impacted body weight at later time

points. Animals who received *P. johnsonii* and *P. distasonis* treatment showed reduced

body weight 40 days after the transfer, with significantly lower lean mass (Figure S6D-

F). There were no differences in percent body fat between groups, nor were there

significant group differences in glucose metabolism in the IPGTT (Figure S6 G).

Importantly, the body weights in the ABX-PARA group did not significantly differ from

the ABX-SAL control group at the time of behavioral testing.

Results from the hippocampal-dependent NOIC memory task showed that while

there were no differences in total exploration time of the combined objects on days 1 or

3 of the task, indicating similar exploratory behavior, animals enriched with

Parabacteroides showed a significantly reduced discrimination index in the NOIC task

compared with either control group (Figure 4A-C), indicating impaired performance in

hippocampal-dependent memory function. When tested in the perirhinal cortex-

dependent NOR task [29], animals enriched with *Parabacteroides* showed impaired object

recognition memory compared with the antibiotic treated control group as indicated by

a reduced novel object exploration index (Figure 4D). These findings show that unlike

sugar-fed animals, *Parabacteroides* enrichment impaired perirhinal cortex-dependent

memory processes in addition to hippocampal-dependent memory.

Results from the zero maze showed no differences in time spent in the open arms

nor in the number of open arm entries for the *Parabacteroides*-enriched rats relative to

controls (Figure 4E, F), indicating that the enrichment did not affect anxiety-like

behavior. Similarly, there were no differences in distance travelled or time spent in the

center arena in the open field test, which is a measure of both anxiety-like behavior and

general activity in rodents (Figure 4G, H). Together these data suggest that

Parabacteroides treatment negatively impacted both hippocampal-dependent

perirhinal cortex-dependent memory function without significantly affecting general

activity or anxiety-like behavior.

Early life sugar consumption and *Parabacteroides* enrichment alter

hippocampal gene expression profiles

To further investigate how sugar and *Parabacteroides* affect cognitive behaviors, we

conducted transcriptome analysis of the hippocampus samples. Figure S7 (A, C) shows

the results of principal component analysis revealing moderate separation based on

RNA sequencing data from the dorsal hippocampus of rats fed sugar in early life

compared with controls. Gene pathway enrichment analyses from RNA sequencing data

revealed multiple pathways significantly affected by early life sugar consumption,

including four pathways involved in neurotransmitter synaptic signaling: dopaminergic,

glutamatergic, cholinergic, and serotonergic signaling pathways. Additionally, several

gene pathways that also varied by sugar were those involved in kinase-mediated

intracellular signaling: cGMP-PKG, RAS, cAMP, and MAPK signaling pathways (Figure

5A, Table S1).

Analyses of individual genes across the entire transcriptome using a stringent

false-discovery rate criterion further identified 21 genes that were differentially

expressed in rats fed early life sugar compared with controls, with 11 genes elevated and

10 genes decreased in rats fed sugar compared to controls (Figure 5B). Among the genes

impacted, several genes that regulate cell survival, migration, differentiation, and DNA

repair were elevated by early life sugar access, including *Faap100*, which encodes an FA

core complex member of the DNA damage response pathway [48], and *Eepd1*, which

transcribes an endonuclease involved in repairing stalled DNA replication forks,

stressed from DNA damage [49]. Other genes associated with endoplasmic reticulum

stress and synaptogenesis were also significantly increased by sugar consumption,

including *Klf9, Dgkh, Neurod2, Ppl*, and *Kirrel1* [50,51,52,53].

Several genes were reduced by dietary sugar, including *Tns2*, which encodes

tensin 2, important for cell migration [54], *RelA*, which encodes a NF/kB complex protein

that regulates activity dependent neuronal function and synaptic plasticity [55], and

Grm8, the gene for the metabotropic glutamate receptor 8 (mGluR8). Notably, reduced

expression of mGluR8 receptor may contribute to the impaired neurocognitive

functioning in animals fed sugar, as mGluR8 knockout mice show impaired

hippocampal-dependent learning and memory [56].

Figure S7 (A-B, D) shows the results of principal component analysis of dorsal

hippocampus RNA sequencing data indicating moderate separation between rats

enriched with *Parabacteroides* and controls. Gene pathway analyses revealed that early

life *Parabacteroides* treatment, similar to effects associated with sugar consumption,

significantly altered the genetic signature of dopaminergic synaptic signaling pathways,

though differentially expressed genes were commonly affected in opposite directions

between the two experimental conditions (Figure S8). *Parabacteroides* treatment also

impacted gene pathways associated with metabolic signaling. Specifically, pathways

regulating fatty acid oxidation, rRNA metabolic processes, mitochondrial inner

membrane, and valine, leucine, and isoleucine degradation were significantly affected by

Parabacteroides enrichment. Other pathways that were influenced were those involved

in neurodegenerative disorders, including Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease,

though most of the genes affected in these pathways were mitochondrial genes (Figure

5D, Table S2).

At the level of individual genes, dorsal hippocampal RNA sequencing data

revealed that 15 genes were differentially expressed in rats enriched with

Parabacteroides compared with controls, with 13 genes elevated and two genes

decreased in the *Parabacteroides* group compared with controls (Figure 6C). Consistent

with results from gene pathway analyses, several individual genes involved in metabolic

processes were elevated by *Parabacteroides* enrichment, such as *Hmgcs2*, which is a

mitochondrial regulator of ketogenesis and provides energy to the brain under

metabolically taxing conditions or when glucose availability is low [57], and *Cox6b1*, a

mitochondrial regulator of energy metabolism that improves hippocampal cellular

viability following ischemia/reperfusion injury [58]. *Parabacteroides* enrichment was also

associated with incased expression of *Slc27A1* and *Mfrp*, which are each critical for the

transport of fatty acids into the brain across capillary endothelial cells [59,60].

Discussion:

Dietary factors are a key source of gut microbiome diversity [27, 45, 61-63] and

emerging evidence indicates that diet-induced alterations in the gut microbiota may be

linked with altered neurocognitive development [27, 63-65]. Our results identify species

within the genus *Parabacteroides* that are elevated by habitual early life consumption of

dietary sugar and are negatively associated with hippocampal-dependent memory

performance. Further, targeted microbiota enrichment of *Parabacteroides* perturbed

both hippocampal- and perirhinal cortex-dependent memory performance. These

findings are consistent with previous literature in showing that early life consumption of

Western dietary factors impair neurocognitive outcomes [8, 9], and further suggest that

altered gut bacteria due to excessive early life sugar consumption may functionally link

dietary patterns with cognitive impairment.

Our previous data show that rats are not susceptible to habitual sugar

consumption-induced learning and memory impairments when 11% sugar solutions are

consumed ad libitum during adulthood, in contrast to effects observed in the present

and previous study in which the sugar is consumed during early life development [22]. It is

possible that habitual sugar consumption differentially affects the gut microbiome when

consumed during adolescence vs. adulthood. However, a recent report showed that

adult consumption of a high fructose diet (35% kcal from fructose) promotes gut

microbial "dysbiosis" and neuroinflammation and cell death in the hippocampus, yet

without impacting cognitive function [66], suggesting that perhaps neurocognitive

function is more susceptible to gut microbiota influences during early life than during

adulthood. Indeed, several reports have identified early life critical periods for

microbiota influences on behavioral and neurochemical endpoints in germ free mice [3, 5]

[4]. However, the age-specific profile of sugar-associated microbiome dysbiosis and

neurocognitive impairments remains to be determined.

While our study reveals a strong negative correlation between levels of fecal

Parabacteroides and performance in the hippocampal-dependent contextual episodic

memory NOIC task, as well as impaired NOIC performance in rats given access to a

sugar solution during adolescence, sugar intake did not produce impairments in the

perirhinal cortex-dependent NOR memory task. That early life sugar consumption

negatively impacts hippocampal-dependent spatial [22] and contextual-based learning

without influencing NOR performance is consistent with previous reports using a

cafeteria diet high in both fat content and sugar [67, 68]. On the other hand, enrichment of

P. johnsonii and *P. distasonis* in the present study impaired memory performance in

both tasks, suggesting a broader impact on neurocognitive functioning with this

targeted bacterial enrichment approach.

Gene pathway analyses from dorsal hippocampus RNA sequencing identified

multiple neurobiological pathways that may functionally connect gut dysbiosis with

memory impairment. Early life sugar consumption was associated with alterations in

several neurotransmitter synaptic signaling pathways (e.g., glutamatergic, cholinergic)

and intracellular signaling targets (e.g., cAMP, MAPK). A different profile was observed

in *Parabacteroides*-enriched animals, where gene pathways involved with metabolic

function (e.g., fatty acid oxidation, branched chain amino acid degradation) and

neurodegenerative disease (e.g., Alzheimer's disease) were altered relative to controls.

Given that sugar has effects on bacterial populations in addition to *Parabacteroides*,

and that sugar consumption and *Parabacteroides* treatment differentially influenced

peripheral glucose metabolism and body weight, these transcriptome differences in the

hippocampus are not surprising. However, gene clusters involved with dopaminergic

synaptic signaling were significantly influenced by both early life sugar consumption

and *Parabacteroides* treatment, thus identifying a common pathway through which

both diet-induced and gut bacterial infusion-based elevations in *Parabacteroides* may

influence neurocognitive development. Though differentially expressed genes were

commonly affected in opposite directions in *Parabacteroides* enriched animals

compared with early life sugar treated animals, it is possible that perturbations to the

dopamine system play a role in the observed cognitive dysfunction. For example, while

dopamine signaling in the hippocampus has not traditionally been investigated for

mediating memory processes, several recent reports have identified a role for dopamine

inputs from the locus coeruleus in regulating hippocampal-dependent memory and

neuronal activity [69, 70]. Interestingly, endogenous dopamine signaling in the

hippocampus has recently been linked with regulating food intake and food-associated

contextual learning [71], suggesting that dietary effects on gut microbiota may also impact

feeding behavior and energy balance-relevant cognitive processes.

Many of the genes that were differentially upregulated in the hippocampus by

Parabacteroides enrichment were involved in fat metabolism and transport. Thus, it is

possible that *Parabacteroides* conferred an adaptation in the brain, shifting fuel

preference away from carbohydrate toward lipid-derived ketones. Consistent with this

framework, *Parabacteroides* was previously shown to be upregulated by a ketogenic

diet in which carbohydrate consumption is drastically depleted and fat is used as a

primary fuel source due. Furthermore, enrichment of *Parabacteroides merdae* together

with *Akkermansia muciniphila* was protective against seizures in mice [27]. It is possible

that *P. distasonis* reduces glucose uptake from the gut, enhances glucose clearing from

the blood, and/or alters nutrient utilization in general, an idea further supported by

recent finding that *P. distasonis* is associated with reduced diet- and genetic-induced

obesity and hyperglycemia in mice [47].

Collective results provide mechanistic insight into the neurobiological

mechanisms that link early life unhealthy dietary patters with altered gut microbiota

changes and neurocognitive impairments. Currently probiotics, live microorganisms

intended to confer health benefits, are not regulated with the same rigor as

pharmaceuticals but instead are sold as dietary supplements. Our findings suggest that

gut enrichment with certain species of *Parabacteroides* is potentially harmful for

neurocognitive mnemonic development. These results highlight the importance of

conducting rigorous basic science analyses on the relationship between diet,

microorganisms, brain, and behavior prior to widespread recommendations of bacterial

microbiome interventions for humans.

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E.E.N., E.Y.H., and S.E.K. designed the experiments. E.E.N. performed the majority of

the behavioral experiments and analyzed the data. C.A.O. and E.Y.H. contributed to the

design and implementation of the bacterial enrichment procedure, quantified

Parabacteroides enrichment, and helped with data analyses. E.D. helped with the

behavioral experiments and performed the RNA sequencing preparation with Y.C. and

X.Y. for analyses of the RNA sequencing data. R.J., M.G., R. S. and C.D.L.S., performed

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Conflicts of Interest:

609   The authors declare no competing interests

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 Figure Legends:

Figure 1: Early-life sugar consumption negatively impacts hippocampal-

dependent memory function. (A, B) Early life sugar consumption had no effect on

total exploration time on days 1 (familiarization) or day 3 (test day) of the Novel Object

in Context (NOIC) task. (C) The discrimination index was significantly reduced by early

life sugar consumption, indicating impaired hippocampal function (P<.05, n=10,11;

two-tailed, type 2 Student's T-test). (D) There were no differences in exploration index

in the Novel Object Recognition (NOR task) (n=6; two-tailed, type 2 Student's T-test).

(E, F) There were no differences in time spent in the open arm or the number of entries

into the open arm in the Zero Maze task for anxiety-like behavior (n=10; two-tailed, type

2 Student's t-test). (G, H) There were no differences in distance travelled or time spent

in the center arena in the Open Field task (n=8; two-tailed, type 2 Student's T-test). (I)

There were no differences in body fat % during adulthood between rats fed early life

sugar and controls (n=10,11; two-tailed, type 2 Student's T-test). (J-K) Body weights and

total energy intake did not differ between the groups (n=10,11; two- way repeated

measures ANOVA), despite (L) increased kcal consumption from sugar sweetened

beverages in the sugar group. CTL=control, SUG= sugar, PN= post-natal day; data

shown as mean $\pm$ SEM.

Figure 2: Effect of adolescent sugar consumption on the gut microbiome in

rats. (A) Principal component analysis showing separation between fecal microbiota of

rats fed early life sugar or controls (n=11, 10; dark triangles= sugar, open circles=

control). (B) Results from LEfSe analysis showing Linear Discriminate Analysis (LDA)

scores for microbiome analysis of fecal samples of rats fed early life sugar or controls.

(C) A cladogram representing the results from the LEfSe analysis with class as the outer

most taxonomic level and species at the inner most level. Taxa in red are elevated in the

sugar group. (D) Relative % abundance of fecal *Parabacteroides* are significantly

elevated in rats fed early life sugar (P<.05; n=11, 10, two-tailed, type 2 Student's T-test).

(E) Linear regression of log normalized fecal *Parabacteroides* counts against shift from

baseline performance scores in the novel object in context task (NOIC) across all groups

tested (n=21). (E, F) Linear regression of the most abundant fecal *Parabacteroides*

species against shift from baseline performance scores in NOIC across all groups tested

(n=21). *P<0.05; data shown as mean $\pm$ SEM.

Figure 3: Intestinal *Parabacteroides* is enriched by antibiotic treatment

and oral gavage of *P. distasonis* and *P. johnsonii*. A) Schematic showing the

timeline for the experimental design of the *Parabacteroides* transfer experiment. B)

Alpha diversity based on 16S rRNA gene profiling of fecal matter (n=7-8) represented by

observed operational taxonomic units (OTUs) for a given number of sample sequences.

C) Principal coordinates analysis of weighted UniFrac distance based on 16S rRNA gene

profiling of feces for SAL-SAL, ABX-SAL, and ABX-PARA enriched rats (n=7-8). D)

Average taxonomic distributions of bacteria from 16S rRNA gene sequencing data of

feces for SAL-SAL, ABX-SAL, and ABX-PARA enriched animals (n=7-8). E) Relative

abundances of *Parabacteroides* in fecal microbiota for SAL-SAL, ABX-SAL, and ABX-

PARA enriched animals (n=7-8) (ANCOM). PN= post-natal day, IP GTT=

intraperitoneal glucose tolerance test. Data are presented as mean $\pm$ S.E.M. * $p < 0.05$,

**$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$. n.s.=not statistically significant. SAL-SAL= rats treated with

saline, ABX-SAL=rats treated with antibiotics followed by sterile saline gavage, ABX-

PARA= rats treated with antibiotics followed by a 1:1 gavage of *Parabacteroides*

distasonis and *Parabacteroides johnsonii.*

Figure 4: Early-life enrichment with *Parabacteroides* negatively impacts

neurocognitive function. (A, B) Early-life enrichment with a 1:1 ratio of *P. johnsonii*

and *P. distasonis* had no effect on total exploration time in the Novel Object in Context

(NOIC) task. (C) Discrimination index was significantly reduced by enrichment with *P.*

johnsonii and *P. distasonis*, indicating impaired hippocampal function (n=7,8; $F_{(2, 19)}$ =

4.92; $P< .05$, one-way ANOVA with Tukey's multiple comparison test). (D) There was a

significant reduction in the exploration index in the Novel Object Recognition (NOR

task), indicating impaired perirhinal cortex function (n=7,8; $F_{(2, 19)}$ = 3.61; $P< .05$, one-

way ANOVA with Tukey's multiple comparison test). (E, F) There were no differences in

time spent or number of entries into the open arm by animals with *P. johnsonii* and *P.*

distasonis enrichment in the Zero Maze task for anxiety-like behavior (n=7,8; one-way

ANOVA) . (G, H) There were no differences in distance travelled or time spent in the

center arena in the Open Field task (n=7,8; one-way ANOVA). SAL-SAL=saline-saline

control, ABX-SAL= antibiotics-saline control, ABX-PARA= antibiotics-*P. johnsonii* and

P. distasonis enriched, PN= post-natal day; data shown as mean $\pm$ SEM; * $P<.05$.

Figure 5: Effect of early life sugar or targeted *Parabacteroides* enrichment

on hippocampal gene expression. (A) Pathway analyses for differentially expressed

genes (DEGs) at a p-value < 0.01 in hippocampal tissue punches from rats fed early life

sugar compared with controls. Upregulation by sugar is shown in red and

downregulation by sugar in blue. (B) A heatmap depicting DEGs that survived the

Benjamini-Hochberg corrected FDR of P< 0.05 in rats fed early life sugar compared

with controls. Warmer colors (red) signify an increase in gene expression and cool

colors (blue) a reduction in gene expression by treatment (CTL=control, SUG= early life

sugar; n=7/group). (C) A heatmap depicting DEGs that survived the Benjamini-

Hochberg corrected FDR of P< 0.05 in rats with early life *Parabacteroides* enrichment

compared with combined control groups. Warmer colors (red) signify an increase in

gene expression and cool colors (blue) a reduction in gene expression by treatment

(n=7, 14). (D) Pathway analyses for differentially expressed genes (DEGs) at a P-value <

0.01 in rats enriched with *Parabacteroides* compared with combined controls.

Upregulation by *Parabacteroides* transfer is shown in red and downregulation in blue.

Dotted line indicates ±0.25 log2 fold change.

Figure 1

A — Day 1: total time (s), CTL vs SUG

Novel Object in Context

B — Day 3: total time (s), CTL vs SUG

C — Discrimination index (%), CTL vs SUG *

Novel Object Recognition

D — Exploration index, CTL vs SUG

Zero Maze

E — Time in open arm (s), CTL vs SUG

F — # Open arm entries, CTL vs SUG

Open Field

G — Distance (m), CTL vs SUG

H — Center time (s), CTL vs SUG

Body composition

I — % Body fat, CTL vs SUG

Energy Balance

J — Body weight (g) vs PN Day, CTL and SUG

K — Total intake (kcal) vs PN Day, CTL and SUG

L — Sugar intake (kcal) vs PN Day

Figure 2

A

CTL (○)
SUG (▲)

PC 3 (2.5 %)
PC 1 (83.5 %)
PC 2 (4.6 %)

B

CTL (gray) SUG (black)

Clostridiaceae
Gammaproteobacteria
Enterobacteriales
Enterobacteriaceae
Mogibacteriaceae
02d06
Porphyromonadaceae
Parabacteroides
C21_c20
Bromii
Copri

LDA SCORE (log 10)

C

SUG

a: Parabacteroides
b: Porphyromonadaceae
c: 02d06
d: Unclassified
e: Clostridiaceae
f: Unclassified
g: Mogibacteriaceae
h: Unclassified
i: Enterobacteriaceae
j: Enterobacteriales

Gammaproteobacteria

D

Parabacteroides Relative % Abundance

*

CTL   SUG

E

Log10 (*Parabacteroides*)

R² = 0.64, *P*<.0001

NOIC baseline shift

F

Log10 (*P. johnsonii*)

R² = 0.50, *P*=.0004

NOIC baseline shift

G

Log10 (*P. distasonis*)

R² = 0.55, *P*=.0001

NOIC baseline shift

Figure 3

A Experimental Design

Saline: Saline (n=8)
ABX: Saline (n=7)
ABX: Parabacteroides (n=8)

Novel Object in Context
Context 1 Context 2 Context 2

Novel Object Recognition

PN 26
PN 27 PN 34 PN 36 PN 50 PN 55 PN 62 PN 73 PN 83
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
PN 60 PN 68 PN 76

1. Habituated to oral gavage
2. Gavage antibiotics every 12 hours
3. *Parabacteroides johnsonii* and *distasonis* (1:1) delivered by oral gavage
4. Animals maintained in sterile housing
5. Novel Object in Context testing
6. Novel Object Recognition testing
7. Zero Maze testing and Open Field testing
8. IP GTT
9. Body composition analyses

B

SAL-SAL
ABX-SAL
ABX-PARA

Observed OTUs

****
n.s.

Sequences per sample
(x 1000)

C

PC2 (27.9%)

SAL-SAL
ABX-SAL
ABX-PARA

PC1 (41.3%)

D

Relative Abundance (%)

g_Parabacteroides;s_
g_Lactobacillus;s_
f_S24-7;g_;s_
o_Clostridiales;_;_;_
f_Lachnospiraceae;_;_
f_Lachnospiraceae;g_;s_
g_Bifidobacterium;
s_pseudolongum
g_Ruminococcus;s_
o_Clostridiales;f_;g_;s_
f_Ruminococcaceae;g_;s_

SAL-SAL ABX-SAL ABX-PARA

E

W statistic = 144
clr 59.99

Parabacteroides Relative % Abundance

SAL-SAL ABX-SAL ABX-PARA

Figure 4

Table 1

Term	Overlap	P.value	Adjusted.P.value	Odds.Ratio	Combined.Score
cAMP signaling pathway	18/211	9.08710002926925e-07	0.000275339130886858	3.922209511	54.56279715
Long-term potentiation	10/67	1.75113958513324e-06	0.000265297647147685	6.862240522	90.96067106
Vascular smooth muscle contraction	14/140	2.31824837751272e-06	0.000234143086128785	4.597701149	59.65378698
Oxytocin signaling pathway	14/154	7.11610557675168e-06	0.000539044997438939	4.179728318	49.54294651
Circadian entrainment	11/99	1.02664310479357e-05	0.000622145721504906	5.108556833	58.68010783
Amphetamine addiction	9/68	1.58699502114579e-05	0.000801432485678624	6.085192698	67.24797055
Calcium signaling pathway	15/189	1.74937542122293e-05	0.000757229646615067	3.648969166	39.96959184
Cholinergic synapse	11/113	3.60773936379843e-05	0.00136643128403866	4.475638287	45.78508194
Axon guidance	14/180	4.14870567165781e-05	0.00139673090945813	3.575989783	36.08219845
Apelin signaling pathway	12/138	4.9577399145753e-05	0.00150219519411632	3.998001	39.62808792
Neurotrophin signaling pathway	11/121	6.78430713999647e-05	0.00186876823947175	4.179728318	40.11834187
Dopaminergic synapse	11/135	0.000181335935857366	0.00457873238039848	3.746275011	32.2747558
Glutamatergic synapse	10/114	0.000194050732212181	0.00452287475848392	4.033071184	34.47223604
Aldosterone synthesis and secretion	9/102	0.0003852671882922	0.00833828271803832	4.056795132	31.89279298
cGMP-PKG signaling pathway	12/172	0.000397324053301256	0.00802594587668537	3.207698476	25.11871164
Inflammatory mediator regulation of TRP channels	10/127	0.000464586599843255	0.00879810873453165	3.620237126	27.78301233
MAPK signaling pathway	16/294	0.000759189930175949	0.0135314440496066	2.502150285	17.97359249
GnRH signaling pathway	8/90	0.000767481845084928	0.0129192777255963	4.086845466	29.31247298
Glioma	7/75	0.0012196493427778	0.0194501974137724	4.291187739	28.79040196
Renin secretion	7/76	0.00131872717084366	0.0199787166382814	4.234724743	28.08083358
Retrograde endocannabinoid signaling	10/150	0.00167349865616307	0.0241461948960672	3.0651341	19.59490832
Neuroactive ligand-receptor interaction	17/348	0.00171069778931894	0.0235609740983472	2.246003435	14.30895981
Serotonergic synapse	9/132	0.00241588944480672	0.0318267174685407	3.134796238	18.88930332
Fc gamma R-mediated phagocytosis	7/87	0.00287625632706458	0.0363127361291903	3.699299775	21.64558595
Regulation of actin cytoskeleton	12/217	0.00294032709499641	0.0356367643913564	2.542507548	14.82087258
Dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM)	7/90	0.00347972133870684	0.0405521371395451	3.575989783	20.24297392
Apoptosis	9/141	0.00375836444668354	0.0421772010127819	2.934702861	16.38670992
Cocaine addiction	5/48	0.00377562901206963	0.040857699666325	4.789272031	26.7202504
Morphine addiction	7/92	0.00393256649864465	0.0410885396237699	3.498250875	19.37493308
Arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ARVC)	6/72	0.00476843186679707	0.0481611618546504	3.831417625	20.48175394
Proteoglycans in cancer	11/203	0.00502723467090038	0.0491371646865424	2.491365155	13.18650979
Ras signaling pathway	12/233	0.00518599384881057	0.0491048792559251	2.367914755	12.45947913
response to calcium ion (GO:0051592)	11/80	1.2352727119088e-06	0.00630359664887059	6.32183908	86.00368202
axon guidance (GO:0007411)	15/159	2.11788224048725e-06	0.00540377653660322	4.337453915	56.66924273
nervous system development (GO:0007399)	25/456	2.46003232910435e-05	0.0418451499180649	2.52066949	26.75123758
semaphorin-plexin signaling pathway (GO:0071526)	6/30	3.8991177233796e-05	0.0497429943560153	9.195402299	93.35333482
regulation of cAMP biosynthetic process (GO:0030817)	5/19	4.29910702140572e-05	0.0438766862604667	12.09921355	121.651762
integral component of plasma membrane (GO:0005887)	61/1464	7.0402625056926e-07	0.00031399570775389	1.915708812	27.13879347
dendrite (GO:0030425)	16/216	2.18212117029006e-05	0.00486613020974683	3.405704555	36.55216023
Hypothetical Network for Drug Addiction WP1246	6/31	4.74677094198248e-05	0.00835431685788917	8.898776418	88.59142051

Table 2

	Term	Overlap	P.value	Adjusted.P.va	Old.P.value	Old.Adjusted	Odds.Ratio	Combined.Sc	Genes	database
1	Ribosome	16/170	2.2535714016	0.0006828321	0	0	4.06555711	52.8644159	RPS7;RPS5;F	KEGG_2019_Mouse
2	Alzheimer disease	14/175	5.9653102426	0.0090374450	0	0	3.45572354	33.6136999	NDUFA13;ND	KEGG_2019_Mouse
3	Parkinson disease	12/144	0.0001349676	0.0136317326	0	0	3.59971202	32.0751456	NDUFA13;ND	KEGG_2019_Mouse
4	Valine, leucine and isoleucine degradation	7/56	0.0002964533	0.0224563378	0	0	5.39956803	43.8640434	BCKDHA;ALD	KEGG_2019_Mouse
5	Cardiac muscle contraction	8/78	0.0004441011E	0.0267253189	0	0	4.4304148	34.2313287	UQCRQ;COX	KEGG_2019_Mouse
6	Hepatocellular carcinoma	12/171	0.0006547942	0.0330671074	0	0	3.03133644	22.2233021	TCF7L2;SMA	KEGG_2019_Mouse
7	cGMP-PKG signaling pathway	12/172	0.0006895098	0.0298459255	0	0	3.01371239	21.9384086	ATF2;PPP1R	KEGG_2019_Mouse
8	Colorectal cancer	8/88	0.0009893071	0.0374700074	0	0	3.92695857	27.1686854	TCF7L2;SMA	KEGG_2019_Mouse
9	Fatty acid degradation	6/50	0.0009995403	0.0336511912	0	0	5.18358531	35.8093221	ACADL;ECI1;	KEGG_2019_Mouse
10	Thermogenesis	14/231	0.0010310146	0.0312397432	0	0	2.61797238	18.0043508	ATF2;NDUFA	KEGG_2019_Mouse
11	Oxidative phosphorylation	10/134	0.0011365669	0.0313072522	0	0	3.22362271	21.8553336	NDUFA13;ND	KEGG_2019_Mouse
12	Dopaminergic synapse	10/135	0.0012027348	0.0303690537	0	0	3.19974402	21.5123824	ATF2;GRIA2;	KEGG_2019_Mouse
13	Vascular smooth muscle contraction	10/140	0.0015824106	0.0368823395	0	0	3.08546745	19.8975807	PPP1R12A;AI	KEGG_2019_Mouse
14	Endocrine and other factor-regulated calcium reabsorption	6/55	0.0016548484	0.0358156477	0	0	4.71235028	30.1781074	GNAQ;BDKRI	KEGG_2019_Mouse
15	Pathways in cancer	24/535	0.0016621713	0.0335758610	0	0	1.9377889	12.401133	RET;TCF7L2;	KEGG_2019_Mouse
16	Huntington disease	12/192	0.0017815419	0.0337379513	0	0	2.69978402	17.090378	NDUFA13;ND	KEGG_2019_Mouse
17	Endometrial cancer	6/58	0.0021800554	0.0388562817	0	0	4.46860803	27.3854397	TCF7L2;APC;	KEGG_2019_Mouse
18	Gastric cancer	10/150	0.0026327375	0.0443177484	0	0	2.87976962	17.1050571	TCF7L2;SMA	KEGG_2019_Mouse
19	Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)	10/151	0.0027627966	0.0440593356	0	0	2.8606983	16.8538379	NDUFA13;ND	KEGG_2019_Mouse
20	SRP-dependent cotranslational protein targeting to membrane (GO:0	16/90	2.3456175755	1.1969686487	0	0	7.67938565	170.277339	RPS7;RPS5;F	GO_Biological_Process_2018
21	protein targeting to ER (GO:0045047)	16/98	8.7398242692	2.2299661623	0	0	7.05249702	147.100707	RPS7;RPS5;F	GO_Biological_Process_2018
22	viral transcription (GO:0019083)	17/114	1.1115537635	1.8907529518	0	0	6.44158994	132.809526	RANBP2;RPS	GO_Biological_Process_2018
23	cotranslational protein targeting to membrane (GO:0006613)	15/94	4.0895658105	5.2172635828	0	0	6.89306558	133.138369	RPS7;RPS5;F	GO_Biological_Process_2018
24	viral gene expression (GO:0019080)	16/111	5.7091825356	5.8267916958	0	0	6.2265289	118.186928	RANBP2;RPS	GO_Biological_Process_2018
25	nuclear-transcribed mRNA catabolic process, nonsense-mediated de	15/113	5.3284114672	4.5318139528	0	0	5.73405455	96.0318102	RPS7;RPS5;F	GO_Biological_Process_2018
26	cellular protein metabolic process (GO:0044267)	31/485	3.8477509014	0.0002805010	0	0	2.76101623	40.7818853	RPLP0;RPL1	GO_Biological_Process_2018
27	cytoplasmic translation (GO:0002181)	10/55	4.6181807744	0.0002945822	0	0	7.85391714	114.573688	RPS7;RPLP0	GO_Biological_Process_2018
28	nuclear-transcribed mRNA catabolic process (GO:0000956)	17/175	6.9899324550	0.0003963291	0	0	4.19623573	59.4758706	RPS7;RPS5;F	GO_Biological_Process_2018
29	peptide biosynthetic process (GO:0043043)	17/175	6.9899324550	0.0003566962	0	0	4.19623573	59.4758706	RPS7;MRPS2	GO_Biological_Process_2018
30	rRNA metabolic process (GO:0016072)	18/201	1.0939569396	0.0005074965	0	0	3.86834725	53.0958095	UTP15;RPS7;	GO_Biological_Process_2018
31	rRNA processing (GO:0006364)	18/203	1.2630718406	0.0005371213	0	0	3.83023545	52.0221194	UTP15;RPS7;	GO_Biological_Process_2018
32	translation (GO:0006412)	19/233	2.2650960072	0.0008891373	0	0	3.52246498	45.7846244	MRPS24;RPS	GO_Biological_Process_2018
33	viral process (GO:0016032)	18/221	4.2461156389	0.0015477091	0	0	3.51827057	43.5192688	RANBP2;RPS	GO_Biological_Process_2018
34	mitochondrial ATP synthesis coupled electron transport (GO:004277!	11/86	4.6602675565	0.0015854230	0	0	5.52513938	67.8290294	NDUFA13;ND	GO_Biological_Process_2018
35	ribosome biogenesis (GO:0042254)	18/227	6.1737508478	0.0019690406	0	0	3.42527664	41.086892	UTP15;RPS7;	GO_Biological_Process_2018
36	ncRNA processing (GO:0034470)	18/228	6.5623672682	0.0019698682	0	0	3.4102535	40.698508	UTP15;RPS7;	GO_Biological_Process_2018
37	respiratory electron transport chain (GO:0022904)	11/95	1.2341294187	0.0034987569	0	0	5.00170513	56.5320706	NDUFA13;ND	GO_Biological_Process_2018
38	gene expression (GO:0010467)	24/412	3.6661542004	0.0098465183	0	0	2.51630355	25.7009765	RANBP2;RPS	GO_Biological_Process_2018
39	fatty acid oxidation (GO:0019395)	7/51	0.0001634500	0.0417042818	0	0	5.92893745	51.6944239	ACADL;ECI1;	GO_Biological_Process_2018
40	fatty acid beta-oxidation (GO:0006635)	7/51	0.0001634500	0.0397183636	0	0	5.92893745	51.6944239	ACADL;ECI1;	GO_Biological_Process_2018
41	ribosome (GO:0005840)	14/77	2.3166517915	1.0332266990	0	0	7.85391714	156.160557	RPS7;DHX9;F	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
42	cytosolic ribosome (GO:0022626)	16/125	3.2420827636	7.2298445629	0	0	5.52915767	95.3473647	RPS7;RPS5;F	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
43	polysomal ribosome (GO:0042788)	8/29	2.1739502116	3.2319393146	0	0	11.9162881	182.814327	RPL7A;DHX9	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
44	cytosolic part (GO:0044445)	16/160	1.0068540108	0.0001122642	0	0	4.31965443	59.6487254	RPS7;RPS5;F	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
45	polysome (GO:0005844)	10/64	1.9857457595	0.0001771285	0	0	6.74946004	88.6171437	RPL7A;DHX9	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
46	cytosolic small ribosomal subunit (GO:0022627)	8/50	1.7758618489	0.0013200573	0	0	6.91144708	75.6018288	RPS27;RPS7	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
47	small ribosomal subunit (GO:0015935)	8/54	3.1741224241	0.0020223694	0	0	6.39948804	66.2852205	RPS27;RPS7	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
48	cytosolic large ribosomal subunit (GO:0022625)	8/70	0.0002085490	0.0116266070	0	0	4.93674792	41.8405998	RPL7A;RPLP(	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
49	large ribosomal subunit (GO:0015934)	8/73	0.0002795591	0.0138537081	0	0	4.73386787	38.7339115	RPL7A;RPLP(	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
50	ficolin-1-rich granule lumen (GO:1904813)	10/124	0.0006237135	0.0278176225	0	0	3.48359228	25.7082819	EEF1A1;ALAI	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
51	endocytic vesicle lumen (GO:0071682)	4/18	0.0006702942	0.0271773869	0	0	9.59923206	70.1492075	SPARC;HBB;/	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
52	mitochondrial inner membrane (GO:0005743)	18/342	0.0011028826	0.0409904699	0	0	2.27350233	15.4821598	NDUFA13;ND	GO_Cellular_Component_2018
53	RNA binding (GO:0003723)	56/1388	3.4592110509	0.0398155191	0	0	1.74280006	17.9018416	OTUD4;CELF	GO_Molecular_Function_2018
54	RNA polymerase binding (GO:0070063)	5/19	5.7845249375	0.0332899410	0	0	11.3675117	110.921214	ZFP36;DHX9;	GO_Molecular_Function_2018
55	Cytoplasmic Ribosomal Proteins WP163	15/92	3.0072409788	5.2927441227	0	0	7.04291483	138.197785	RPS7;RPS5;F	WikiPathways_2019_Mouse
56	Fatty Acid Beta Oxidation WP1269	7/34	1.0660091045	0.0009380880	0	0	8.89340617	101.820639	ACADL;GK;E(	WikiPathways_2019_Mouse
57	Mitochondrial LC-Fatty Acid Beta-Oxidation WP401	5/16	2.3013966424	0.0013501526	0	0	13.4989201	144.160493	ACADL;ECI1;	WikiPathways_2019_Mouse
58	mRNA processing WP310	22/457	0.0010577431	0.0465406987	0	0	2.07948353	14.2478263	RNASEH2A;F	WikiPathways_2019_Mouse
59	Fatty acid oxidation WP2318	3/10	0.0013102260	0.0461199575	0	0	12.9589633	86.0158391	ACADM;HADI	WikiPathways_2019_Mouse

Supplemental Figure Legends:

Figure S1: Effect of early life sugar consumption on food intake and

metabolic measures (A, B) There were no differences in lean mass or in fat mass

between animals fed sugar solutions or control animals (n=10,11; two-tailed, type 2

Student's T-test). (C) Kcals from chow intake were lower throughout the feeding period

in animals fed early life sugar (n=10,11). (D) Results from the intraperitoneal glucose

tolerance test show an elevated area under the curve (AUC) in rodents fed sugar

solutions during early life (n=10,11; two-tailed, type 2 Student's T-test; P<.05).

CTL=control, SUG= sugar, PN= post-natal day; data shown as mean $\pm$ SEM.

Figure S2: Relationship between *Parabacteroides* and behavioral outcomes

in the Novel Object in Context task (NOIC) A) Linear regression of log normalized

fecal *Parabacteroides* counts against shift from baseline performance scores in the

NOIC task in sugar (SUG) and control (CTL) groups (n=10, 11). (B, C) Linear regression

of the most abundant fecal *Parabacteroides* species against shift from baseline

performance scores in NOIC across all groups tested (n=10, 11). *P<0.05; data shown as

mean $\pm$ SEM.

Figure S3: Effect of early life sugar consumption on the rat cecal microbiota

(A) Principal component analysis (PCA) was run using all phylogenic levels (112

normalized taxa abundances) and shows different clustering patterns based on overall

cecal microbial profiles. (B) Linear discriminant analysis (LDA) Effect Size (LEfSe), run

using the GALAXY platform, identified characteristic features of the cecal microbiota of

rats fed a control diet or early life sugar. Relative differences among groups were used to

rank the features with the LDA score set at 2. (C) Identified taxa are displayed by scores

and on a phylogenic cladogram. CTL=control, SUG= sugar.

Figure S4: Effect of early life sugar consumption on the rat fecal microbiota.

Filtered bacterial abundances by taxonomic levels phylum, class, order, family, genus in

fecal samples from rats fed a control diets or early life sugar. Differences in abundances

were assessed by Mann-Whitney non-parametric test. * $p<0.05$, *** $p<0.001$.

CTL=control, SUG= sugar.

Figure S5: Effect of early life sugar consumption on the rat cecal

microbiota: Filtered bacterial abundances by taxonomic levels phylum, class, order,

family, genus in cecal samples from rats fed a control diets or early life sugar.

Differences in abundances were assessed by Mann-Whitney non-parametric test. *

$p<0.05$, *** $p<0.001$. CTL=control, SUG= sugar.

Figure S6: Experimental design, food intake, and metabolic measures for

gut *Parabacteroides* enrichment (A) Effect of antibiotic treatment on food intake

(B) and body weight (n=7,8). (C) Effect of gut *Parabacteroides* enrichment on body

weight at PN 51 prior to the start of behavioral testing (n=7,8; one way ANOVA with

Tukey's post hoc test, $F_{(2,20)}$= 8.79; *P<.05) (D) Effect of gut *Parabacteroides*

enrichment on body weight (n=7,8; one way ANOVA with Tukey's post hoc test, $F_{(2,19)}$=

5.7; *P<.05) (E) lean mass (n=7,8; one way ANOVA with Tukey's post hoc test, $F_{(2,19)}$=

5.33; *P<.05) (F) and body fat (one way ANOVA, n.s.) at PN 76. (G) Blood glucose levels

during an interaperitoneal glucose tolerance test (IP GTT) (n=7,8 one way ANOVA for

AUC; n.s.) SAL-SAL=saline-saline control, ABX-SAL= antibiotics-saline control, ABX-

PARA= antibiotics-*P. johnsonii* and *P. distasonis* enriched, PN= post-natal day; data

shown as mean $\pm$ SEM.

Figure S7: Principal component analyses (PCA) of hippocampal gene

expression data to identify outliers (A) PCA identified one control sample (red

arrow) as an outlier when all samples from both sugar and *Parabacteroides* enrichment

experiments were considered. (B) PCA identified one treatment sample (red arrow)

from the *Parabacteroides* experiment as an outlier. After removing the outliers, PCA

for the remaining samples from the sugar treatment experiment (C) and those from the

Parabacteroides enrichment experiments (D).

Figure S8: Comparison of hippocampal gene expression pathways altered

by sugar and *Parabacteriodes*. The dopaminergic synapse pathway overlaps in the

sugar and *Parabacteroides* transfer experiments. Red= upregulated by sugar, dark

blue= downregulated by sugar, orange= upregulated by *Parabacteroides*, light blue=

downregulated by *Parabacteroides*. * $P < 0.05$ and ** $P < 0.01$. Dotted line indicated $\pm$

0.25 log2 fold change.

Figure S1

Figure S2

A

B

C

Figure S3

Figure S4

Figure S5

Figure S6

Figure S7

Figure S8

Dopaminergic synapse