Life history recorded in the vagino-cervical microbiome

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SUMMARY

The gut microbiome has been the center of attention for human commensal microbiome studies. For the vagina, another densely populated body site, 16S rRNA gene amplicon sequencing studies have identified community types and observed dynamic changes related to menstrual cycles and sexual behaviors in small cohorts. Here we perform metagenomic shotgun sequencing on cervical samples from 1148 volunteers (a cohort more than 20-fold of the Human Microbiome Project (HMP)). Factors such as pregnancy and delivery histories and contraception methods were all more important than menstrual cycle, and contributing to non-Lactobacilli bacterial or viral species in the vagino-cervical microbiome. *Bifidobacterium* was seen with older age at sexual debut or marriage; *Streptococcus agalactiae* was found in those who suffered a heavy menstrual flow. Other features such as mood fluctuations and facial speckles could potentially be deduced from the vagino-cervical microbiome. *Lactobacillus crispatus* and *Prevotella bivia* could be shared between the gut and the vagino-cervical microbiome. Oral microbiome, plasma vitamins, metals, amino acids and hormones showed clear associations with the vagino-cervical microbiome. Our results offer an unprecedented glimpse into the microbiota of the female reproductive tract and point to disease susceptibilities that may be relieved by behavioral changes.

Highlights:

1   Shotgun sequencing of 1148 vagino-cervical samples reveal rare subtypes;

2 Other omics such as moods and skin features can be predicted by the vagino-cervical

3 microbiome;

4 Delivery mode, breast-feeding, and means of contraception make a lasting impact;

5 With dwindled Lactobacilli, postmenopausal samples harbor more viruses.

INTRODUCTION

The human body is a supra-organism consisting of more microbial cells than human

cells. Studies in human cohorts and animal models have revealed an integral role

played by the gut microbiota in metabolic and immunological functions. Disease

markers as well as prebiotic or probiotic interventions are being actively developed.

Studies on other mucosal sites such as the vagina and the mouth lag behind; the

potential for the microbiota in these body sites has not been fully realized. The presence

of microorganisms beyond the cervix (i.e. the upper reproductive tract) is increasingly

recognized even in non-infectious conditions (Aagaard et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2017; Li

et al., 2018), with much debated implications for women's and infants' health.

Lactobacilli have long been regarded as the keystone species of the vaginal microbiota.

Lactic acid produced by these microorganisms helps maintain a low vaginal pH of 3.5-

4.5, and wards off pathogenic micro-organisms. Prevention of the human

immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), preterm

birth and bacterial vaginosis (BV) has been a major effort. Due to the over 90% of

human sequences in female reproductive tract samples (Li et al., 2018; Methé et al.,

2012), most studies of the vaginal microbiota used 16S rRNA gene amplicon

sequencing, which lacked a view of the overall microorganism communities including

bacteria, archaea, viruses and fungi, as well as the functional capacity encoded.

Besides infection, studies on current sexual activity and the menstrual cycle occurred

naturally to the vaginal microbiota field (Gajer et al., 2012; Ravel et al., 2010). However,

lasting impacts from other potentially important factors such as sexual debut, pregnancy

and breast-feeding have not been looked at in a reasonably large cohort.

As a sizable reservoir of microbes instead of a transient entity, the female reproductive

tract microbiota might also reflect conditions in other body sites. It is however not clear

whether other omics in circulation or in the intestine cross-talks with the vagino-cervical

microbiome. Intersecting with hormones, metabolic and immune functions, we find it

intriguing to explore the potential link of the vagino-cervical microbiome to the brain and

the face.

Here, we report the full spectrum of the vagino-cervical microbiome from 1148 healthy

women using metagenomic shotgun sequencing. We also comprehensively measured

parameters such as fecal/oral microbiome, plasma metabolites, medical test data,

immune indices, physical fitness test, facial skin imaging, as well as female life history

questionnaire, lifestyle questionnaire, and psychological questionnaire (Figure 1). Taken

together, our work pinpoints other metadata or omics that can predict or be predicted

from the microbiota in the female reproductive tract, which would illuminate future

designs of population cohorts as well as means of intervention.

RESULTS

Dominant bacterial and non-bacterial members of the vagino-cervical
metagenome

To explore the vagino-cervical microbiome, 516 healthy Chinese women aged 21-52

(median 29, 95% CI: 23–39) were recruited during a physical examination as the initial

study cohort (Figure 1; Table S1). Cervical samples were collected using a cytobrush

and immediately preserved on Flinders Technology Associates (FTA) cards.

Metagenomic shotgun sequencing was performed on the DNA samples, and high-

quality non-human reads were used for taxonomic profiling of the vagino-cervical

microbiome (Figure 2).

In agreement with 16S rRNA gene amplicon sequencing data from the US (Ravel et al.,

2010), the vagino-cervical microbiota of this Asian cohort was mostly Lactobacilli-

dominated, while 19.19% of women harbored over 50% *Gardnerella vaginalis* (Figure 2,

Figure S1A). Some of the volunteers were dominated by *Atopobium vaginae* but not *G.*

vaginalis, which were commonly believed to co-occur in bacterial vaginosis (BV)

(Fredricks et al., 2005). 22.67% of the cohort was dominated by *Lactobacillus iners*

(Figure 2, Figure S1A), which was far less protective against bacterial and viral

infections compared to *Lactobacillus crispatus*. Rare subtypes such as *Bifidobacterium*

breve, Lactobacillus johnsonii, *Streptococcus anginosis*, *Lactobacillus amylovorus* and

Escherichia coli were also detected in this cohort (Figure 2, Figure S1A). Other

microorganisms including *Clamydia trachomatis*, *Ureaplasma parvum*, human

papillomavirus (HPV), herpesviruses, *Haemophilus influenzae* and Enterobacteria

phage were abundant in some individuals (Figure 2). According to the metagenomic

data, the vagino-cervical microbiome varied widely among individuals (Figure 2, Figure

S1A), and the mean proportion of non-bacterial sequences was 3.45%. The vaginal

types of *G. vaginalis*, *L. crispatus*, and *B. breve* showed lower proportions of human

sequences than other types (Figure S1B), suggesting that in future studies lower

amounts of sequencing could be used for these compared to other types.

Factors shaping the vagino-cervical microbiome and beyond

We computed the prediction value (5-fold cross-validated random forest model) of

female life history questionnaire on the microbiome data, and found the most important

factors to be pregnancy, marriage, mode of delivery, age at vaginal sexual debut,

current breast-feeding, contraceptive methods, menstrual cycle, and sexual intercourse

frequency (Figure 3).

Weaker but nonetheless significant dependences were observed between the vagino-

cervical microbiome and practices such as sexual intercourse within 24 hours, HPV

vaccination, vaginal douching, oral probiotics, antibiotics and herbal medicine (Figure 3).

As a whole, the vagino-cervical microbial composition showed the greatest explained

variances for these questionnaire data collected for the female reproductive tract

samples , followed by other data collected on the same day, such as fecal microbiome

composition, psychological questionnaire, plasma metabolites, immune indices, facial

skin imaging and medical test data (Figure 4A). Self-assessed depression was the

strongest factor in the psychological questionnaire to be predicted by vagino-cervical

microbiome composition, spots on the cheeks constituted the best predicted factor in

facial skin imaging, and plasma phosphoserine was ranked the first metabolites (Figure

4B).

Specific influences from pregnancy histories, contraception and menstrual
symptoms

Marriage was one of the most significant factors to influence the vagino-cervical

microbiome (Figure 3). It showed negative correlations with relative abundances of *L.*

crispatus, *Acinetobacter* species, *L. jensenii*, *L. vaginalis*, *Ureaplasma parvum,* and

Comamonas testosteroni, and positive correlation with *Bifidobacterium breve* (Figure 5A**,**

Table S2). Compared to unmarried women, married women had higher concentrations

of plasma vitamin D, and their plasma testosterone (responsible for sexual drive),

dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), and creatinine had declined (Figure 5A). The age at

vaginal sexual debut showed positive correlations with *Gardnerella vaginalis* and

Scardovia species, and negative associations with *L. crispatus* and *L. iners* (Figure 5B**,**

Table S2).

Similarly, the women who went through pregnancy showed decreased *Lactobacillus*,

including *L. crispatus*, *L. vaginalis*, and *L. jensenii*, but were enriched for Actinobacteria,

Bifidobacteriaceae, *Anelloviridae* and *Torque teno* virus (the most abundant anellovirus

in the human virome) in the vagino-cervical microbiome (Figure 5C**,** Table S2, Figure

S2). We observed increased concentrations of plasma vitamin D, blood glucose and

direct bilirubin in women with previous pregnancy, but lower concentrations of plasma

testosterone, androstenedione, dehydroepiandrosterone and methionine (Figure 5C).

Vaginal deliveries were associated with decreased *L. crispatus*, *L. jensenii*, *Bartonella*

species, *Prevotella timonensis*, and increased *Lactobacillus* sp. 7_1_47FAA (Figure 5D,

Table S2). We observed a lower relative abundance of *Ureaplasma parvum* in

individuals who delivered by cesarean section (Figure 5E, Table S2), a bacterium

commonly isolated from pregnant women (Anderson et al., 2013) and recently reported

in the lower respiratory tract of preterm infants (Pattaroni et al., 2018). Compared with

vaginal deliveries, the plasma concentrations of testosterone, androstenedione,

methionine, threonine and tryptophan were significantly lower in women who

experienced caesarean section (Figure 5D, 5E). In addition, these women more often

suffered from an abnormal leucorrhoea (Figure 5E).

In our cohort, 63 volunteers happened to be actively breast-feeding. *L. crispatus*, and *L.*

iners was found to be less abundant in these actively breast-feeding individuals (Figure

5F). Alkaline phosphatase, plasma vitamin D and lead (Pb) were found to be more

abundant in the breast-feeding individuals, consistent with slight reduction of

progesterone and creatinine levels in lactating women (Figure 5F). Gravida and para,

especially deliveries by caesarean section, appeared associated with facial skin

problems such as UV spots and porphyrins, but these problems may be reduced by

breast-feeding (Figure 5C-5F).

Integrated association network using a wisdom of crowds approach (Marbach et al.,

2012) also revealed interesting patterns (Spearman's correlation, random forest and

linear regression, Figure 6). The relative abundance of *G. vaginalis* was negatively

associated with sleep and appetite, and mental state, while positively associated with

plasma levels of mercury (Hg) and vitamin E (Figure 6). *L. iners* negatively correlated

with times of spontaneous abortion, days since last menstrual bleeding, condom usage

and the plasma concentration of vitamin D and vitamin A, and positively correlated with

plasma concentrations of hemoglobin, asparagine and alanine. In addition, vaccination

history, such as those against HPV may be associated with higher relative abundance

of *L. iners* (Figure 6). Vaginal douching within the past month positively correlated with

E. coli in the gut microbiome (Figure 6), which might contribute to urinary tract infections.

We found multiple significant associations between the contraceptive methods of

participants and their vagino-cervical microbiome. Condom usage showed negative

correlations with *L. iners* and *Comamonas* species, and positive associations with

Prevotella species (Table S2, Figure 6). Oral contraceptives, on the other hand, were

associated with increased *Ureaplasma parvum*, *Comamonas* species and

Mycoplasmataceae (Figure 5G, Table S2, and Figure 6). *Comamonas* has been

implicated in fecundity in *C. elegans* and identified as a marker for infertility due to

endometriosis (Chen et al., 2017; MacNeil et al., 2013). Moreover, oral contraceptives

exhibited a positive correlation with plasma homocitrulline, and as yet not significant

declines in mental health and butyrate-producing fecal microbiota species such as

Faecalibacterium prausnizi and *Roseburia intestinalis* (Figure 5G), which could

potentially contribute to the known side effect of oral contraceptives in cardiovascular

risk. Thus, although lack of contraception could lead to infection, none of the

contraceptive methods appeared healthy for the microbiome in the long run.

Menstrual phases are known to influence the microbiota in the female reproductive tract

(Chen et al., 2017; Gajer et al., 2012). We confirmed in our cohort that *L. iners* gradually

decreased in proportion after menses, coinciding with the increase in progesterone and

the decrease of plasma threonine and arginine (Figure 5H). White blood cell counts

(WBC) also recovered after menses, consistent with greatest susceptibility to infection

at the onset of menses. *L. vaginalis*, *L. johnsonii* and *Weissella* species showed

negative correlations with self-reported regular periods (Figure 6). *Streptococcus*

agalactiae, *Propionibacterium acnes* and *Dialister micraerophilus* were positively

associated with a heavier flow (Figure 6). Many women experience dysmenorrhea

during menses. Individuals with dysmenorrhea were enriched for Pseudomonadales,

Acinetobacter and *Moraxellaceae*, while lower in plasma level of histidine (Figure 5I),

consistent with these bacteria producing histidine decarboxylases to convert histidine

into histamine (Cundell et al., 1991).

Omics factors associated with vaginal types, immune and metabolic functions

The omics data also significantly differed among individuals with the different vaginal

types (Figure S1, Figure S3). The women with types of *B. breve* and *G. vaginalis* had

older age at vaginal sexual debut (Figure S3A), and the results advocate for getting a

partner at a younger age. The types characterized by *L. crispatus* and *L. jensenii* were

overrepresented in the women who were not married yet or had fewer pregnancies

(Figure S3B, C). We observed higher plasma levels of proline and creatinine in the *S.*

anginosus-type individuals, but lower plasma levels of 11-deoxycortisol and 17α-

hydroxyprogesterone (Figure S3D-G). The plasma concentrations of 11-deoxycortisol,

17α-hydroxyprogesterone and testosterone were higher in individuals of the *L.*

crispatus-type than in *L. iners* and *G. vaginalis* type individuals (Figure S3F-H). Vaginal

types also appeared associated with facial skin feature such as *A. vaginae* and *L.*

johnsonii types had higher rates of facial skin problem than other types (Figure S3I-L).

Fecal *Neisseria* species, *Haemophilus* species and *Aggregatibacter* species showed

greater abundance in the *L. jensenii*-type (Figure S3M-O).

While lacking significant association with the vagino-cervical microbial composition, the

immune repertoire data, especially TRBV7.3 and TRBV7.4, showed multiple

associations with functional pathways in the vagino-cervical microbiome, such as purine

and pyrimidine metabolism, synthesis of branched-chain amino acids, histidine and

arginine (Figure S4). Red blood cell counts, plasma vitamin A and plasma hydroxyl

vitamin D levels negatively associated with CDP-diacylglycerol biosynthesis pathways,

consistent with presence of diacylglycerol kinase in Lactobacilli with anti-inflammatory

functions (Andrada et al., 2017; Ganesh et al., 2017). Fecal *Coprococcus comes*, a

bacterium previously reported to associate with cytokine response to *Candida albicans*

(Schirmer et al., 2016), was seen here to associate with isoleucine pathways in the

vagino-cervical microbiome (Figure S4).

Validation in a more heterogeneous cohort along with oral microbiome data

In an independent cohort of 632 individuals that differed in age distribution (Figure 1,

Table S3), we again investigated the factors that explain the vagino-cervical microbiome

and vice versa. Consistent with the initial cohort of 516 individuals, questionnaire entries

such as pregnancy history, breast-feeding, delivery mode and times were found as the

most important factors to influence the vagino-cervical microbiome in this cohort (Figure

S5). The oral microbiome, which was reported to show similarity to the placenta

microbiome (Aagaard et al., 2014), showed notable associations with the vagino-

cervical microbiome (Table S4). Oral Human herpesvirus was positively correlated with

Bifidobacteriaceae and *G. vaginalis* in vagina. *Scardovia wiggsiae*, a bacterium

previously reported to associate with early childhood caries(Kressirer et al., 2017),

showed positive correlation with vaginal *Staphylococcus* species. Oral *Treponema*

lecithinolyticum showed positive correlation with *Dialister micraerophilus*. Besides, we

observed fecal *L. crispatus* to associate with the same species in the vagino-cervical

sample.

45 of the volunteers were postmenopausal, an age group untouched by HMP (median

age 54, 95% CI: 52-55). Metagenomic shotgun data clearly showed diminished

Lactobacilli in their vagino-cervical microbiome, while the mean proportion of viral

sequences reached 37% (Figure S6). HPV was not the most abundant or prevalent

virus in these postmenopausal individuals; a diverse range of viruses named after plant

or animal hosts could be detected. In contrast, there was no sign of fungal boom. The

non-Lactobacilli bacterial species were also known as vaginal or oral species, with

overgrowth of *Escherichia* in very few individuals (Figure S6A).

The integrated association network between omics also revealed patterns that were

highly similar to the initial cohort (Figure 7, Table S5). Age, pregnancy history, current

breast-feeding showed negative correlations with relative abundances of *L. crispatus*, *L.*

jensenii, *L. vaginalis*, *L. iners* and *U. parvum*. We also reconfirmed a lower relative

abundance of *U. parvum* and a higher abundance of *P. timonensis* and *P. buccalis* in

individuals who delivered by cesarean section. The increased concentrations of

androstenedione, dehydroepiandrosterone, testosterone, 11-deoxycorticosterone and

progesterone and decreased concentration of Lead (Pb) were observed in women with

higher abundance of *L. crispatus*. We observed the increased concentrations of

threonine, arginine, serine, and alanine and decreased concentrations of 17α-

hydroxyprogesterone, progesterone, 25-hydroxy vitamin D, carnosine, and alanine

aminotransferase in women with higher abundance of *U. parvum*. Serum creatinine

showed positive correlations with *L. crispatus* and *L. vaginalis*, and negative

associations with *A. vaginae*, *Dialister micraerophilus*, *Finegoldia magna*, *Streptococcus*

agalactiae, *P. bivia*, *L. gasseri* and *P. timonensis*. The BV species *P. bivia* was

negatively associated with fecal *Butyricimonas* species and *Clostridia* species, while

positively associated with fecal *P. bivia*, suggesting a fecal reservoir for recurrent

vaginal infections. The wrinkles and red area in forehead were relieved in individuals

who enriched for *L. iners*. Together, these results confirmed the long-range links

between the vagino-cervical microbiome and other body sites.

DISCUSSION

As the largest metagenomic study for the vagino-cervical microbiome, our data revealed

lesser known subtypes for the vaginal microbiota, and put into context viral and fungal

sequences present in healthy women. Our multi-omic data on a cohort of young women

could help target efforts aimed at promoting a healthy reproductive tract microbiota and

offering better advices for mothers from pregnancy to recovery, as well as preventing

infections from viruses such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and HPV. For

example, whether vitamin D supplementation should be considered in African countries

to reduce vaginal *L. iners*, and therefore HIV and BV susceptibility. While the focus in

the field has always been infection, our data highlight major aspects (e.g. marriage,

delivery methods, breast-feeding, contraception) that are worth further investigations for

women in the modern world. The vagino-cervical microbiome of postmenopausal

women was also probed for the first time, revealing a myriad of viral and bacterial

species. While fungal growth might be unfavorable both due to high pH and lack of

glycans.

By reaching to the cervix with a cytobrush, reflecting both the upper and the lower

reproductive tract (Chen et al., 2017; Li et al., 2018), we show here that the association

with the fecal microbiome was overall weak, but involved both healthy (*L. crispatus*)

and unhealthy (*P. bivia*) species. The plasma metabolites and T cell receptor types

associated with the vagino-cervical microbiome are distinct from those associated with

the fecal microbiome (Jie et al., 2019). The vagino-cervical microbiome also better

predicted facial skin features compared to the fecal microbiome (Jie et al., 2019). As a

densely populated microbiota other than the distal gut, the vagino-cervical microbiota

has the potential to reflect or even influence physiology elsewhere in the human body.

Beauty industry might be attracted to this important ecosystem in order to radiant from

within.

STAR⬛METHODS

Detailed methods are provided in the online version of this paper and include the

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SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Supplemental Information includes six figures and five tables and can be found with this

article online at XXX.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

H.J. and C.C. conceived and organized this study. J.W. initiated the overall health project. C.C., L.H., F.L, L.S., Y.L., X.Y. and N.L. performed the sample collection and questionnaire collection. X.T., Y.K., W.R., Y.L., D.Z., X.Q., X.C., and J.Z. provided the omics data. Z.J., C.C., F.L, L.H., and L.T. performed the bioinformatic analyses, H.J., C.C., Z.J. and X.Z. wrote the manuscript. All authors contributed to data and texts in this manuscript.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. Schematic overview of the study.

The study consists two cohorts with varying characteristics. 516 volunteers recruited in

2017 are regarded as the initial study cohort, and 632 volunteers recruited in 2018 are

regarded as the validation cohort. Vagino-cervical microbiome, fecal microbiome,

metabolites, medical test data, physical fitness test data, facial skin feature and three

kinds of questionnaires are collected in both cohorts. Immune indices are only shown in

the initial study cohort, and saliva microbiome is only shown in the validation cohort.

Figure 2. Vagino-cervical microbiome of the initial study cohort.

The microbial composition in each sample at the species level according to MetaPhylAn2 is shown. The samples are ordered according to hierarchical clustering. Taxa names in black and blue denote bacteria and viruses, respectively.

Figure 3. Factors from female life history questionnaire influencing the vagino-cervical microbiome in the initial study cohort.

Female life history questionnaire entries on the vagino-cervical microbiome, ordered according to their 5-fold cross-validated random forest (RFCV) importance on the microbiome composition.

Figure 4. Global view of factors influencing the vagino-cervical microbiome in the initial study cohort.

(A) Predicting the vagino-cervical microbiome from each omics and vice versa using stepwise redundancy analysis. Numbers on the straight arrows indicate adjusted R-squared from vagino-cervical microbiome to omics data; numbers on the curved arrows indicate adjusted R-squared from omics data to vagino-cervical microbiome . (B) Top 8 factors in each type of omics that are predicted by the vagino-cervical microbiome. The length of the bars represents RFCV Rcorrelation coefficient between the actual measurements and the values predicted by 5-fold cross-validated random forest models.

Figure 5. Specific influences from reproductive factors on omics data in the initial study cohort.

The factors shown ((A) Marriage; (B) Age at vaginal sexual debut; (C) Pregnancy history; (D) Number of vaginal deliveries; (E) Number of cesarean deliveries; (F) Current breast-feeding; (G) Oral contraceptives; (H) Days since last menstrual bleeding; (I) Dysmenorrhea). Wisdom of crowds was performed to calculate the correlation of omics data. The bars are colored according to the type of omics, as in **Figure 3A**. The metabolites such as amino acids, hormones and vitamins are measured in plasma, and trace elements are measured in whole blood. The blood biochemistry such as alkaline phosphatase, fasting blood sugar, direct bilirubin, creatinine, total bilirubin, high-density lipoprotein is measured in serum. The length of the bars represents Spearman's correlation coefficient between the factor and the omics data. A plus sign denotes BH-adjusted P-value <0.1, an asterisk denotes Q-value <0.05, two asterisks denote Q-value <0.01, three asterisks denote Q-value <0.001, four asterisks denote Q-value <0.0001, and five asterisks denote Q-value <0.00001.

Figure 6. Wisdom of the crowds for the association network between vagino-cervical microbial species and other omics data in the initial study cohort.

Results from generalized linear model with penalty (cv. glmnet), random forest (RFCV) and Spearman's correlation are integrated and then visualized in CytoScape. Red lines, negative associations; cyan lines, positive associations.

Figure 7. Wisdom of the crowds for the association network between vagino-

cervical microbial species and other omics data in the initial study cohort and the

validation cohort.

Results from generalized linear model with penalty (cv. glmnet), random forest (RFCV)

and Spearman's correlation are integrated and then visualized in CytoScape. The

correlation is shown when the same enrichment direction in both cohorts and BH-

adjusted P-value <0.1. Red lines, negative associations; cyan lines, positive

associations.

STAR★METHODS

KEY RESOURCES TABLE

REAGENT or RESOURCE	SOURCE	IDENTIFIER
Biological Samples		
Cervical samples	This paper	N/A
Fecal samples	This paper	N/A
Saliva samples	This paper	N/A
Blood samples	This paper	N/A
Critical Commercial Assays		
FTA card	BGI	N/A
MGIEasy sample collection kit	MGI	http://www.mgitech.cn/article/detail/mgieasyfbybcjtzjz111.html
MGIEasy DNA Library Prep Kit	MGI	http://www.mgitech.cn/article/detail/MGIEasy%20DNA.html
Deposited Data		
Raw sequencing data	This paper	CNGB database accession CNP0000287
Software and Algorithms		
Metaphlan2	(Segata, 2012)	https://bitbucket.org/biobakery/metaphlan2
R	R Development Core Team	https://www.r-project.org/
randomForest R package	(Liaw and Wiener, 2001)	https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=randomForest
packfor R package	N/A	https://rdrr.io/rforge/packfor/
CytoScape	(Shannon et al., 2013)	https://cytoscape.org/
glmnet R package	(Friedman et al., 2010)	https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=glmnet
ggplot2 R package	(Wickham, 2015)	https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=ggplot2
HUMANn2	(Kolde et al., 2018)	https://bitbucket.org/biobakery/humann2/downloads/
pheatmap R package	N/A	https://CRAN.R-project.org/package=pheatmap

CONTACT FOR REAGENT AND RESOURCE SHARING

Further information and requests for resources and reagents should be directed to, and

will fulfilled by, the Lead Contact, Huijue Jia (jiahuijue@genomics.cn).

EXPERIMENTAL MODEL AND SUBJECT DETAILS

Initial Study Cohort

All the 516 volunteers were recruited between May 2017 and July 2017 during annual

physical examination in BGI-Shenzhen, China. Baseline characteristics of the cohort are

shown in Table S1.

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) at BGI-Shenzhen,

and all participants provided written informed consent at enrolment.

Validation Cohort

An independent cohort of 632 were also recruited between May 2018 and July 2018

during annual physical examination in BGI-Shenzhen, China. The volunteers who

underwent physical examination for two consecutive years were excluded from the

validation cohort. The process of omics data collection was consistent with the initial

study cohort. In addition, saliva samples were collected only in this cohort. Baseline

characteristics of the cohort are shown in Table S2.

The study was approved by the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) at BGI-Shenzhen,

and all participants provided written informed consent before any material was taken.

METHODS DETAILS

Demographic Data Collection

During physical examination, the volunteers received three kinds of online questionnaire.

The female life history questionnaire contained pregnancy and delivery history,

menstrual phases, sexual activity, contraceptive methods. The lifestyle questionnaire

contained age, disease history, eating and exercise habits. The psychological

questionnaire contained the evaluation of irritability, dizziness, frustration, fear, appetite,

self-confidence, resilience (Table S1, S3).

Samples Collection

Cervical samples were collected and smeared in the Flinders Technology Associates

(FTA) cards by the doctor during gynecological examination. Fecal samples and saliva

samples were self-collected by volunteers. Cervical samples, fecal samples and saliva

samples were stored for metagenomic shotgun sequencing. The overnight fasting blood

samples were drawn from a cubital vein of volunteers by the doctors.

DNA extraction and metagenomics shotgun sequencing

DNA extraction of cervical samples and fecal samples was performed as

described(Chen et al., 2017)'(Qin et al., 2012), respectively. Metagenomic sequencing

was done on the BGISEQ-500 platform (50bp of singled-end reads for cervical samples

collected in the initial study cohort, and four libraries were constructed for each lane;

100bp of singled-end reads for fecal samples collected in the initial study cohort, and

four libraries were constructed for each lane; 100bp of paired-end reads for cervical

samples, fecal samples and saliva sample collected in the validation cohort, and eight

libraries were constructed for each lane)(Fang et al., 2018).

Amino Acid Measurements

40 µl plasma was deproteinized with 20 µl 10% (w/v) sulfosalicylic acid (Sigma)

containing internal standards, then 120 µl aqueous solution was added. After

centrifuged, the supernatant was used for analysis. The analysis was performed by ultra

high pressure liquid chromatography (UHPLC) coupled to an AB Sciex Qtrap 5500

mass spectrometry (AB Sciex, US) with the electrospray ionization (ESI) source in

positive ion mode. A Waters ACQUITY UPLC HSS T3 column (1.8 µm, 2.1 × 100 mm)

was used for amino compound separation with a flow rate at 0.5 ml/min and column

temperature of 55 °C. The mobile phases were (A) water containing 0.05% and 0.1%

formic acid (v/v), (B) acetonitrile containing 0.05% and 0.1% formic acid (v/v). The

gradient elution was 2% B kept for 0.5 min, then changed linearly to 10% B during 1

min, continued up to 35% B in 2 min, increased to 95% B in 0.1 min and maintained for

1.4 min. Multiple Reaction Monitoring (MRM) was used to monitor all amino

compounds. The mass parameters were as follows, Curtain gas flow 35 L/min, Collision

Gas (CAD) was medium, Ion Source Gas 1 (GS 1) flow 60 l/min, Ion Source Gas 2 (GS

2) flow 60 l/min, IonSpray Voltage (IS) 5500V, temperature 600 °C. All amino compound

standards were purchased from sigma and Toronto research chemical (TRC).

Hormone Measurements

250 µl plasma was diluted with 205 µl aqueous solution, For SPE experiments, HLB

(Waters, USA) was activated with 1.0 ml of dichloromethane, acetonitrile, methanol,

respectively and was equilibrated with 1.0 ml of water. The pretreated plasma sample

was loaded onto the cartridge and was extracted using gravity. Clean up was

accomplished by washing the cartridges with 1.0 ml of 25% methanol in water. After

drying under vacuum, samples on the cartridges were eluted with 1.0 ml of

dichloromethane. The eluted extract was dried under nitrogen and the residual was

dissolved with 25% methanol in water and was transferred to an autosampler vial prior

to LC−MS/MS analysis. The analysis was performed by UHPLC coupled to an AB Sciex

Qtrap 5500 mass spectrometry (AB Sciex, US) with the atmospheric pressure chemical

ionization (APCI) source in positive ion mode. A Phenomone Kinetex C18 column (2.6

µm, 2.1 × 50 mm) was used for steroid hormone separation with a flow rate at 0.8

ml/min and column temperature of 55 °C. The mobile phases were (A) water containing

1mM Ammonium acetate, (B) Methanol containing 1mM Ammonium acetate. The

gradient elution was 25% B kept for 0.9min, then changed linearly to 40% B during

0.9min, continued up to 70% B in 2 min, increased to 95% B in 0.1 min and maintained

for 1.6 min. Multiple Reaction Monitoring (MRM) was used to monitor all steroid

hormone compounds. The mass parameters were as follows, Curtain gas flow 35 l/min,

Collision Gas (CAD) was medium, Ion Source Gas 1 (GS 1) flow 60 l/min, Ion Source

Gas 2 (GS 2) flow 60 l/min, Nebulizer Current (NC) 5, temperature 500 °C. All steroid

hormone profiling compound standards were purchased from sigma, Toronto research

chemical (TRC), Cerilliant and DR. Ehrenstorfer.

Trace element Measurements

200 µl of whole blood were transferred into a 15 mL polyethylene tube and diluted 1:25

with a diluent solution consisting of 0.1% (v/v) Triton X-100, 0.1% (v/v) HNO_3,2mg/L AU,

and internal standards (20 µg/L). The mixture was sonicated for 10min before ICP-MS

analysis. Multi-element determination was performed on an Agilent 7700x ICP-MS

(Agilent Technologies, Tokyo, Japan) equipped with an octupole reaction system (ORS)

collision/reaction cell technology to minimize spectral interferences. The continuous

sample introduction system consisted of an autosampler, a quartz torch with a 2.5-

mmdiameter injector with a Shield Torch system, a Scott double-pass spray chamber

and nickel cones (Agilent Technologies, Tokyo, Japan). A glass concentric MicroMist

nebuliser (Agilent Technologies, Tokyo, Japan) was used for the analysis of diluted

samples.

Water-soluble Vitamins Measurements

200 µl plasma were deproteinized with 600 µl methanol (Merck), water, acetic acid (9:1:0.1) containing internal standards, thiamine-(4-methyl-13C-thiazol-5-yl-13C3) hydrochloride (Sigma-Aldrich), levomefolic acid-13C, d3, riboflavin-13C,15N2, 4-pyridoxic acid-d3 and pantothenic acid-13C3,15N hemi calcium salt (Toronto Research Chemicals). 500 µl supernatant were dried by nitrogen flow. 60 µl water were added to the residues, vortexed, the mixture was centrifuged and the supernatant was for analysis. The analysis was performed by UPLC coupled to a Waters Xevo TQ-S Triple Quad mass spectrometry (Waters, USA) with the electrospray ionization (ESI) source in positive ion mode. A Waters ACQUITY UPLC HSS T3 column (1.7 µm, 2.1 × 50 mm) was used for water-soluble vitamins separation with a flow rate at 0.45 ml/min and column temperature of 45 °C. The mobile phases were (A) 0.1 % formic acid in water, (B) 0.1% formic acid in methanol. The following elution gradient was used: 0–1 min,99.0%–99.0% A; 1–1.5 min, 99.0% A–97.0% A; 1.5–2 min, 97.0% A–70.0% A,2–3.5 min, 70% A–30% A; 3.5–4.0 min, 30%A–10.0%A; 4.0–4.8 min, 10%A–10.0%A; 4.9–6.0 min, 99.0%A–99.0%A. Multiple Reaction Monitoring (MRM) was used to monitor all water-soluble vitamins. The mass parameters were as follows, the capillary voltages of 3000V and source temperature of 150°C were adopted. The desolvation temperature was 500°C. The collision gas flow was set at 0.10 ml/min. The cone gas and desolvation gas flow were 150 l/h and 1000 l/h, respectively. All water-soluble vitamins standards were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (USA).

Fat-soluble Vitamins Measurements

250 µl plasma were deproteinized with 1000 µl methanol and acetonitrile, (v/v,1:1)

(Fisher Chemical) containing internal standards, all-trans-Retinol-d5, 25-

HydroxyVitamin-D2-d6, 25-HydroxyVitamin-D3-d6, vitamin K1-d7, α-Tocopherol-d6

(Toronto Research Chemicals). 900 µl supernatant were dried by nitrogen flow. 80 µl

80% acetonitrile were added to the residues, vortexed, the mixture was centrifuged, and

the supernatant was used for analysis. The analysis was performed by UPLC coupled

to an AB Sciex Qtrap 4500 mass spectrometry (AB Sciex, USA) with the atmospheric

pressure chemical ionization (APCI) source in positive ion mode. A Waters ACQUITY

UPLC BEH C18 column (1.7 µm, 2.1 × 50 mm) was used for fat-soluble vitamins

separation with a flow rate at 0.50 ml/min and column temperature of 45 °C. The mobile

phases were (A) 0.1 % formic acid in water, (B) 0.1% formic acid in acetonitrile. The

following elution gradient was used: 0–0.5 min,60.0%–60.0% A; 0.5–1.5 min, 60.0% A–

20.0% A; 1.5–2.5 min, 20.0% A–0% A,2.5–4.5 min, 0% A–0% A; 4.5–4.6 min, 0%A–

60.0%A; 4.6–5.0 min, 60.0%A–60.0%A. Multiple Reaction Monitoring (MRM) was used

to monitor all fat-soluble vitamins. The mass parameters were as follows, Curtain gas

flow 30 l/min, Collision Gas (CAD) was medium, Ion Source Gas 1 (GS 1) flow 40 l/min,

Ion Source Gas 2 (GS 2) flow 50 l/min, Nebulizer Current (NC) 5, temperature 400 °C.

All fat-soluble vitamins standards were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (USA), Toronto

research chemical (TRC).

Immune indices Measurements

10 ml whole blood was centrifuged at 3,000 r/min for 10 min, then 165 µl buffy coat were obtained to extract DNA using MagPure Buffy Coat DNA Midi KF Kit (Magen, China). The DNA was sequenced on the BGISEQ- 500 platform using 200 bp singled-end reads. The data processing was performed using Immune IMonitor(Zhang et al., 2015).

Medical Parameters

All the volunteers were recruited during the physical examination. The medical test including blood tests, urinalysis, routine examination of cervical secretion. All the medical parameters were measured by the physical examination center and shown in Table S1and Table S3.

Facial Skin feature

The volunteers were required to clean their face without makeup after they got up in the morning. The volunteer's frontal face was photographed by VISIA-CRTM imaging system (Canfield Scientific, Fairfield, NJ, USA) equipped with chin supports and forehead clamps that fix the face during the photographing process and maintain a fixed distance between the volunteers and the camera at all times. Eight indices were obtained including spots, pores, wrinkles, texture, UV spots, porphyrins, brown spots and red area from the cheek and forehead, respectively (Table S1, S3). The percentile of index was calculated based on the index value ranked in the age-matched database (Table S1, S3). The higher the percentile of index, the better the facial skin appears.

Physical fitness test

8 kinds of tests were performed to evaluate volunteers' physical fitness condition (Table S1, S3). Vital capacity was measured by HK6800-FH (Hengkangjiaye, China). Single-legged stance with eyes closed was measured by HK6800-ZL. Choice reaction time was measured by HK6800-FY. Grip strength was measured by HK6800-WL. Sit and reach was measured by HK6800-TQ. Sit-ups was measured by HK6800-YW. Step index was measured by HK6800-TJ. Vertical jump was measured by HK6800-ZT. We got a measure value from each test. Then each measure value score was assigned grades A through E based on its corresponding age-matched database.

QUANTIFICATION AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Quality control, Taxonomic annotation and abundance calculation

The sequencing reads of fecal samples and saliva samples were quality-controlled and then aligned to hg19 to remove human reads as described previously(Fang et al., 2018). Stringent condition for removal of host sequences was used for cervical samples(Li et al., 2018), through alignment to the GRCh38 reference. Taxonomic assignment of the high-quality cervical metagenomic data and saliva metagenomic data were performed using MetaPhlAn2(Segata, 2012). Taxonomic assignment of the high-quality fecal metagenomic data was performed using the reference gene catalog comprising 9,879,896 genes(Li et al., 2014). Taxonomy of the fecal MLGs/MGSs were then determined from their constituent genes, as previously described(Moll1 et al., 2019; Nielsen et al., 2014; Qin et al., 2012; Wang and Jia, 2016).

Random-forest on the influence of female life history factors

The factors in female life history questionnaire were fitted against the relative

abundances of metaphlan2 profile (found in at least 10% of the samples) in the cervical

samples using default parameters in the RFCV regression function from randomForest

package in R. All the categorical variables were converted into continue variables, and

nominal variables were converted into dummy variables. Spearman's correlation

between measured value and 5-fold cross-validation predicted value was calculated,

then rank the key predictable factors.

The global effect size between vagino-cervical microbiome and omics data.

To evaluate the combined effect size of vagino-cervical microbiome on omics data, we

used forward stepwise redundancy analysis of omics data lists on the relative

abundances of metaphlan2 profile in forward.sel function in the packfor package in R.

This analysis provided a global versus global association between any two omics

datasets that maximize the associations by use the most predict power non-redundant

predictors.

The factors in each type of omics predicted by vagino-cervical microbiome

The factors in each type of omics were fitted against the relative abundances of

metaphlan2 profile (found in at least 10% of the samples) in the cervical samples using

default parameters in the RFCV regression function from randomForest package in R.

All the categorical variables were converted into continue variables, and nominal

variables were converted into dummy variables. Spearman's correlation between

measured value and 5-fold cross-validation predicted value was calculated, then rank

the top 8 predictable factors in each type.

Wisdom of crowds for robust network construction between vagino-cervical
microbial species and other omics data

A new Multi-omics analyses method (Marbach et al., 2012) was used to integrated

coefficient of linear regression, variance importance from randomForest and

Spearman's correlation to construct omics flux networks and then visualized in

CytoScape. The details are as indicated:

Step 1: Data processing. All categorical variables in other omics data were converted

into continuous variables, and nominal variables were converted into dummy variables.

Missing values were filled with median, the samples which contained more than 70%

missing variables were removed. The microbial species less than10% in all the samples

were also removed. Removed near zero variable variables. For linear models, variables

were normalized. Outliers were defined as outside of the 95% quartiles and removed.

Step 2: Method implementation. Random forest variable importance was used to

identify the most important predictor variables(Louppe et al., 2013). RFCV regression

function from randomForest package in R with default parameter was used to get the 5-

fold average variable importance. We calculated the Spearman's correlation with the

cor.test function in base R software. For linear regression, we considered penalty

regression to overcome the sparse and co-linear problem, cv.glmnet function from

glmnet package in R was first used to figure out the best lambda parameter,

bootstrapping glmnet with 0.632 re-sampling was performed 100 times, then we

obtained the best lambda.

Step 3: Construction of robust networks. We kept first 5 average ranks for each target

variable and retained edges with Spearman's correlation Q-value <0.1. Then ggplot

package in R was used to make barplot for some representative female life history

factors (Figure 5). CytoScape was also used to visualized the omics network (Figure 6).

The validation cohort was analyzed using the same statistical method. Combining P-

value is computed using Edgington method from metap package in R. Benjamini and

Hochberg methods were used to adjusted the multiple test P-value. The correlation is

identified based on BH-adjusted P-value <0.1 when the similar microbial distribution

pattern shown in the initial study cohort and validation cohort.

Association between microbiome pathways and other omics

Pathway profile was calculated from the vagino-cervical metagenomic data using

humann2. Spearman's correlation was calculated between the relative abundance of

each pathway and other numerical data collected. R package heatmap were used for

visualization. Q-value <0.1 was considered as significant.

DATA AND SOFTWARE AVAILABILITY
Metagenomic sequencing data for all samples have been deposited to the (CNGB)

database under the accession code CNP0000287.

1148 Healthy women (two cohorts)

Saliva microbiome

Fecal microbiome

Vagino-cervical microbiome

Shotgun metagenomics

39 amino acides (plasma)

13 hormones (plasma)

9 vitamins (plasma)

9 trace elements (whole blood)

622 immune indices (buffy coat)

Blood biochemistry: alkaline phosphatase, fasting blood sugar, bilirubin, globulin, HDL, LDL, creatinine (serum)

BMI, chest circumference, uric acid, leucorrhea cleanliness

Metabolites

Immune indices

Medical test

Physical fitness test
vital capacity
grip strength
sit and reach
sit-ups
step index
vertical jump
choice reaction time
single-legged stance with eyes closed

Facial skin feature
spots
pores
wrinkles
texture
UV spots
porphyrins
brown spots
red area

3 kinds of questionnaires

Female life history questionnaire
Lifestyle questionnaire
Psychological questionnaire

Vagino-cervical microbiome   Metabolites   Psychological questionnaire   Facial skin feature   Lifestyle questionnaire   Female life history questionnaire

Vagino-cervical microbiome • Metabolites • Physical fitness test • Facial skin feature • Lifestyle questionnaire • Female life history questionnaire • Fecal microbiome