The Effects of Host Taxon, Hybridization, and Environment on the Gut Microbiome of *Callithrix* Marmosets

Callithrix Gut Microbiome

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Abstract

Microbiome studies show that host taxon, diet, and environment influence gut bacteria. However, these factors are rarely studied in animal hybrids and exudivores (which nutritionally exploit indigestible oligosaccharides). To investigate the effects of host taxon, hybridization, and environment on gut microbiota, we conducted 16S V4 ribosomal sequencing of the gut microbiome of marmosets (*Callithrix*)*,* non-human primate (NHP) specialist exudivores that also hybridize. We sampled 59 wild, translocated, and captive pure and hybrid *Callithrix*, including endangered *C. aurita*. Gut microbiome diversity differed significantly between hybrids and non-hybrids, but host environment had the strongest overall effect on the gut microbiome. Captive marmosets showed relatively reduced gut microbiome diversity. Wild *Callithrix* had the highest relative abundance of *Bifidobacterium,* which process host-indigestible carbohydrates*,* while captive marmosets had the highest relative abundance of Enterobacteriaceae, a family containing several pathogenic bacteria. The wild marmoset gut microbiome was enriched predictively for carbohydrate metabolism functions, while that of captive marmosets was enriched for nucleotide and amino acid metabolism function. Our findings show that carbohydrate metabolism is integral to the composition and function of the wild exudivore gut microbiome. Further, captivity perturbs the exudivore gut microbiome, raising implications for captive host health and endangered exudivore conservation.

Introduction

The role of the gut microbiome in host physiology and health has been studied widely in humans [1-4] and increasingly in non-human primates (NHPs) and other animals [5-9]. While these studies show that host taxon, diet, and environment are key influences on animal gut bacteria, hybrid and exudivore hosts are underrepresented in such work. Hybridization may perturb host fitness by disrupting interactions between the host genome and gut microbiome from breakage of parental co-adapted gene complexes in hosts [10-11]. Exudivores subsist mainly on relatively indigestible oligosaccharides of tree gums or, if they gouge, hardened saps, that require fermentation for digestion. Their gut microbiomes may be exclusively dedicated to carbohydrate metabolism. Thus, hybridization and exudivory represent intriguing venues to round out our understanding of animal gut microbiomes.

Hybridization is well documented among NHPs and other animals [12-19]. A few studies of captive, natural, and experimental animals show that hybrid gut microbiomes differ from those of parental species [e.g., 10, 11, 20]. Human activities increasingly facilitate anthropogenic hybridization, which may lead to the rise of animal host populations with compromised viability due to perturbed gut microbiomes. Few data are available on anthropogenic hybrid gut microbiomes, and such data will increase comparative datasets that facilitate our understanding of how hybridization may impact animal health.

In terms of animal dietary strategies, gut microbiomes have been mostly studied in folivores, frugivores, and omnivores. For NHPs exploiting such diets, gut microbiome composition is more sensitive to environmental effects than that of other animals [6, 9,

21]. Further, captive diets have lower fiber and plant content than what NHPs eat in

nature [6,9], which may perturb the gut microbiome of captive populations and

negatively impact host health. Indeed, regardless of natural diet, captive NHP gut

microbiome composition tends to resemble that of humans consuming a Western diet [6].

This diet may cause dysbiosis and be directly associated with chronic diseases that drive

morbidity and mortality in industrialized countries [22]. For threatened species, captivity

serves a vital conservation role, and a particular concern is whether a "westernized" gut

microbiome profile would compromise host digestive or immune function for captive

hosts reintroduced into the wild [9].

A number of NHPs are exudivores [23-26], and some exudivore primate species

are endangered or vulnerable (e.g., *Allocebus trichotis, Microcebus berthae,*

M.ravelobensis, Nycticebus bengalensis, C. aurita and C. flaviceps) [27] and some are

known to hybridize [e.g., *Callithrix*: 19; *Microbecus*: 28]. Studies of the exudivore gut

microbiome from the wild are rare [e.g., *Nycticebus pygmaeus*: 29] and even rarer in

captivity [e.g., an individual captive *Callithrix jacchus*: 30]. Further investigation of the

gut microbiome of wild exudivore NHPs will provide baseline data, which could improve

conservation and management of natural host populations. Additionally, similar data

from captive exudivores could facilitate understanding of exudivore welfare in captivity

and during reintroduction initiatives.

Our study focused on marmosets (*Callithrix*), a genus of six species considered to

be specialist exudivores due to several morphological adaptations [23, 25, 31]. Two

species are critically endangered, *C. flaviceps* and *C. aurita,* though conservation plans

underway for both species include reintroductions of captive individuals into the wild

[32]. *Callithrix* species are naturally allopatric, but hybridize at species contact points

[19]. Nonetheless, anthropogenic hybridization occurs widely among *Callithrix* species

due to illegal pet trade and exotic species introduction outside natural species ranges [19].

Here we applied 16S ribosomal (rRNA, V4 region) gene amplicon sequencing of

Callithrix anal microbiotas, and investigated microbiome composition and predictive

functional profiles of the *Callithrix* gut microbiome. Anal swabs were sampled from a

total of 59 individuals across four species (*C. aurita, C. geoffroyi, C. penicillata,* and *C.*

jacchus) and three anthropogenic hybrid types (*C. aurita* x *Callithrix* spp., *C. jacchus* x

C. penicillata, *C. penicillata* x *C. geoffroyi*). These individuals were sampled in the wild

as well as from captive facilities where animals were born in captivity or translocated

from the wild. This multifaceted dataset gives us a unique opportunity to study how host

taxon, hybridization, and environment shape the gut microbiota in specialist exudivore

primates. We hypothesized that: (1) *Callithrix* hybrids have less diverse gut microbiomes

than their parental species; (2) *Callithrix* hosts found in similar environments possess

more similar gut microbiome diversity and predictive function; (3) captive *Callithrix*

have less diverse gut microbiomes than wild *Callithrix*; and (4) as specialist

exudivores, *Callithrix* hosts show gut microbial composition and predictive function

profiles that reflect a relatively strong bias toward carbohydrate metabolism.

Materials and Methods

Sample Collection

We collected anal swabs between 2015 and 2016 from 59 adult individuals (Table

1 and Supplementary Table 1). Figure 1 and Supplementary Table 1 show sampling

locations for: (1) wild marmosets in Viçosa, Minas Gerais (MG), Berilo, MG, and

Guiricema, MG; (2) captive-born marmosets housed at the Guarulhos Zoo, Guarulhos,

São Paulo (SP), CEMAFAUNA Wild Animal Triage Center, Petrolina, Pernambuco

(PE), and Rio de Janeiro Primatology Center (CPRJ), Guapimirim, Rio de Janeiro (RJ);

(3) a wild group from Natividade, RJ that was caught and housed at CPRJ; (4) and a wild

group from Ilha d'Agua Island, Rio de Janeiro, RJ that was caught and kept at SERCAS

(Setor de Etologia, Reintrodução e Conservação de Animais Silvestres) at Universidade

Estadual do Norte Fluminense (UENF), Campos dos Goytacazes, RJ.

Marmoset sampling was authorized by the Brazilian Environmental Ministry

(SISBIO protocol #47964-2), the Arizona State University IACUC (protocol# 15-144R)

and a CPRJ internal review. Wild animals were captured with auto-close Tomahawk style

traps baited with banana. All sampled animals were immobilized by injection of ketamine

(10 mg/kg of body weight) into the inner thigh intramuscular region. Animals were

photographed, weighed, measured, and kept under veterinary observation. Copan

FLOQSwab tips were inserted and rotated in the anal region and then each swab was

submerged in a storage buffer (50 mM Tris pH 8.0, 50 mM EDTA, 50 mM Sucrose, 100

mM NaCl, 1% SDS) for several seconds and then discarded. Under field conditions, the

storage buffer was kept at room temperature and then at 4C in the laboratory. After

sample collection, animals were returned to cages, given a banana, and allowed to

recover. All recovered wild marmosets were released at the original capture site.

Specimens were identified as pure *C. aurita*, *C. geoffroyi*, *C. jacchus* and *C.*

geoffroyi or hybrid (*C. aurita* x *Callithrix* spp., *C. jacchus* x *C. penicillata*, and *C.*

penicillata x *C. geoffroyi*) based on phenotypic characters following descriptions [34-37],

and whole genome genotyping (unpublished data). Specimens were further classified by

their environment as wild (captured as free-range individual), translocated (born in the

wild but later put into captivity), or captive (born and raised in captivity based on

information from captive facilities).

Sample Processing and Sequencing

Bacterial DNA extraction from *Callithrix* anal swabs was carried out by adding

0.3g zirconia beads to tubes containing storage buffer and swabbed material following a

modified phenol-chloroform protocol [38]. Modifications included beating the samples

on a vortex fitted with a horizontal vortex adaptor (#13000-V1-24, Mo Bio, Carlsbad,

CA, USA) for 10 minutes at step "2Aiii," precipitating samples in 100% ethanol in step

"2Axvi," and rehydrating DNA pellets in 25 uL low TE buffer at step "2Axxii."

Extracted DNA was quantified on a Qubit3 (Life Technologies, Carlsbad, CA, USA)

with a dsDNA HS Assay Kit (Life Technologies). Then the V4 region of the bacterial

16S rRNA gene was amplified in triplicate using the barcoded primer set 515f/806r [39].

Genetic samples have been registered in the Brazilian CGen SISGEN database

(Supplementary Table 2). Amplicon triplicates were combined for each individual and

then pooled in equimolar amounts into a multiplexed Illumina sequencing library. The

library was purified with a Zymo DNA Concentrator and Cleaner-5 (#D4013, Zymo

Research, Irving, CA, USA) and size selected for 375-380 base pairs with Agencourt

Ampure XP (#A63880, Beckman Coulter, Indianapolis, IN, USA) magnetic beads.

Following international regulations, DNA extraction and library preparation was carried

out at the Federal University of Viçosa, Brazil and then sequenced at Arizona State

University, USA on an Illumina MiSeq for 2x250 cycles.

Bioinformatics and Statistical Analysis

Sequence data were demultiplexed using default parameters in Qiime2-2018.6

(https://qiime2.org) [40]. The DADA2 Qiime2 plug-in [41] was used to quality-filter and

trim sequences and join paired-end reads. Upon trimming, the first 10 and last 30

nucleotides were removed from reverse reads due to low base quality. These steps

resulted in feature tables of DNA sequences and their per-sample counts, termed sub-

operational taxonomic units (sOTUs) [42]. MAAFT and FastTree Qiime2 plug-ins

[43,44] aligned and produced a phylogenetic tree of feature sequences, which was then

mid-pointed rooted. Qiime2's q2-diverity plug-in was used to carry out alpha diversity

analyses (Shannon's diversity index, observed OTUs, and Pielou's Evenness) and

calculate beta diversity weighted UniFrac distance [45]. Based on rarefaction, we set the

minimum sampling depth to 45000 reads for alpha and beta diversity measures. Box-

plots were generated for each alpha diversity measure according to host taxon, hybrid

status, and environment. Kruskal-Wallis group and pairwise tests determined statistical

significance for each category. UniFrac principle coordinate analysis (PCoA) plots were

also generated according to host taxon, hybrid status, and environment. Statistical

significance of UniFrac PCoA plots within each category was determined by

PERMANOVA group and pairwise tests [46]. All pairwise comparisons were corrected

with the Benjamini–Hochberg procedure [47]. The corrected P-value was considered

significant at $p < 0.05$.

Taxonomic composition of samples was determined with the QIIME2 q2-feature-

classifier plug-in, which was trained on the Greengenes OTU database [version 13_8, 48]

at the 99% level. Reads were limited to 500 nucleotides from the portion of the 16S V4

region bound by the 515F/806R primer pair. Afterward, QIIME2 was used to generate

bar plots of bacterial taxonomic abundance based on host taxon, hybrid status, and

environment.

The QIIME2 gneiss plug-in [49] was used to carry out differential abundance

analysis of bacterial taxa within and among hosts based on host taxon classification,

hybrid status, and environment. Briefly, partitions were made for microbes that

commonly co-occur together via Ward hierarchical clustering, which then underwent

isometric log ratio transformation to control for false positives by testing "balances" (i.e.,

changes in log ratios between microbial abundances) [42]. Linear regression tested for

balances between microorganisms using host taxon, hybrid status, and environment as

co-variants by the ordinary least-squares (OLS) method.

PICRUST 1.1.3 [50] was used for predictive functional profiling of bacterial

communities via a phylogeny-based approach to correlate sampled bacterial species to

the Greengenes 13_5 99% OTU reference dataset [50]. Initially, the Greengenes

reference data was used in QIIME2 to make a closed-reference OTU table from our

sequence reads and converted to biom format. The OTU table was normalized by 16s

rRNA copy number in PICRUST and the extrapolated metagenome results then were

input into HUMAnN 0.99 [51]. This program reconstructs microbial pathway abundances

from metagenomic data using the KEGG Orthology catalogue [52, 53, 54]. The

HUMAnN KEGG pathway modules output was used in LefSe [55] on the Huttenhower

lab Galaxy server (http://huttenhower.sph.harvard.edu/galaxy/) to identify how

abundance of modules differ between marmosets categorized by taxon, hybrid status, and

environment with linear discriminant analysis (LDA) coupled with effect size. These

differences were then plotted in GraPhlAn 0.9 [56].

Results

225   A total of 11,123,817 sequence reads was obtained with an average of 188,539

226   (129,170 +/- SD) reads per sample. After quality filtering, 9,063,712 reads remained with

227   an average 153,622 (103,648 +/- SD) reads per sample. Afterward, merging of paired-end

228   sequences produced 843,615 reads, with an average of 142,891 (96,076 +/- SD) reads per

229   sample. This information is detailed in Supplementary Table 3.

Gut Microbiome Alpha Diversity based on Host Taxon, Hybridization, and Environment

Rarefaction excluded a total of seven individuals from alpha diversity analysis

(Supplementary Table 1). Although taxa differed significantly in Shannon's diversity

index (Figure 2A; Kruskal-Wallis group test, H=16.88, p=0.01), Kruskal-Wallis pairwise

tests were not significant (Supplementary Table 4). The number of observed OTUs

among taxa ranged from 61 to 571 (Supplementary Table 1), and median values varied

significantly among taxa (Figure 2B; Kruskal-Wallis group test, H=28.16, p=0.00). For

pairwise comparisons, the median observed OTUs in *C. jacchus* x *C. penicillata* hybrids

were significantly different from that of *C. aurita* and *C. penicillata* x *C. geoffroyi*

hybrids (Supplementary Table 5). Although taxa differed significantly in species

evenness (Figure 2C; Kruskal-Wallis group test, H=16.41, p=0.01), subsequent pairwise

tests were not significant (Supplementary Table 6).

Shannon diversity index values of hybrid marmosets were significantly higher

than those of non-hybrid marmosets (Figure 3A; Kruskal-Wallis pairwise test, H=10.22,

p =0.001). Pairwise differences between hybrids and non-hybrids were significant for

both observed OTU number (Figure 3B; Kruskal-Wallis pairwise test, H=7.24, p=0.007)

and evenness (Figure 3C; Kruskal-Wallis pairwise test, H=8.10, p =0.004) (Figures 3B

and 3C). Shannon's index differed significantly among wild, translocated, and captive

marmosets (Figure 4A; Kruskal-Wallis group test, H=9.85, p=0.007), and pairwise

differences were significant between captive vs. translocated and captive vs. wild groups

(Supplementary Table 7). Differences in median observed OTUs were significant among

host environment categories (Figure 4B; Kruskal-Wallis group test, H=15.95, p=0.00),

specifically between translocated vs. captive and translocated vs. wild (Supplementary

Table 8). Species evenness differences were significant among host environments (Figure

4C; Kruskal-Wallis one-way test, H=10.03, p <0.007), with captive vs. translocated and

captive vs. wild comparisons showing significant pairwise differences (Supplementary

Table 9).

Gut Microbiome Beta Diversity based on Host Taxon, Hybridization,

and Environment

PCoA plots of weighted Unifrac distances suggested that hybridization and

environment more strongly affect host differences in gut microbial composition than

taxon affiliation (Figures 5A-C). The first PCoA axis explained 33.02% of gut microbial

variation and the second axis explained 19.49%. In separating the samples by taxon

(Figures 5A), some taxa showed loose clustering, but most of them showed

interdispersion in the upper and lower right quadrants. Distances among taxa were

significant (PERMANOVA, pseudo-F = 2.67, p-value= 0.002), but there were few

significant pairwise comparisons among them (Supplementary Table 10). In Figure 5B,

hybrid status showed most non-hybrids clustering in the lower right PCoA quadrant

whereas hybrids were more prominent in the lower and upper left quadrants. These

differences for hybrid status were significant (PERMANOVA, pseudo-F = 4.43, p-

value=0.003). Finally, separation of hosts according to environment resulted in the most

prominent clustering patterns between wild, translocated, and captive samples,

particularly along the first axis (Figure 5C). Weighted Unifrac distances between samples

by environment were significant at both the group level (PERMANOVA, pseudo-F =

8.88, p-value=0.001), as well as for all pairwise comparisons (Supplementary Table 11).

Differential OTU abundance based on Host Taxon, Hybridization, and

Environment

The most abundant bacterial classes among hosts (Figure 6, Supplementary

Figure S1) were Gammaproteobacteria, Epsilonproteobacteria, Bacteroidia,

Actinobacteria, Clostridia, and Alphaproteobacteria; although, many other bacterial

classes were recognized. Hosts showed variation in both bacterial class and abundance

among individuals (Supplementary Figure S1A), particularly in *C. aurita*, *C. geoffroyi*,

and *C. penicillata*- taxa that were sampled across different locations and environments. In

considering host hybrid status, Gammaproteobacteria was particularly abundant in pure

hosts and Epsilonproteobacteria and Bacteroidia are more prominent in hybrid hosts

(Supplementary Figure S1B). Finally, a strong pattern of bacterial taxonomic abundance

(limited to class for brevity) emerges upon classifying hosts by environment (Figure 6).

At the family level these patterns are dominated by: (1) Enterobacteriaceae (class

Gammaproteobacteria) in captive hosts; (2) families Helicobacteraceae and

Campylobacteraceae (class Epsilonproteobacteria), Bacteroidaceae (class Bacterioidia),

and Sphingomonadaceae (class Alphaproteobacteria) in translocated hosts; and (3)

Helicobacteraceae and Campylobacteraceae, Bacterioidia (family undetermined),

Bifidobacteriaceae (class Actinobacteria), and Veillonellaceae (class Clostridia) in wild

hosts.

Using a multivariate response linear regression on the "balance" of the microbial

community of the *Callithrix* gut model, we evaluated the effect of different types of taxa,

hybrid status, and environmental categories on the microbiome. Together, these

categories explained 25.15% of the variation of the *Callithrix* gut microbiota, with

environment having the strongest effect by being a covariate that explained 6% of the

variation (Supplementary Table 12). A good fit of this "balance" model to our data is

indicated by predicted points lying within the same region as the original microbial

community and the residuals have roughly the same variance as the predicted points

(Supplementary Figure S2).

Predictive Metagenomic and Metabolic Characterization of Marmoset

Gut Microbiome

Metagenome prediction by PICRUSt using 16S rRNA gene amplicon data

analyzed in QIIME2 resulted in predicted proteins classified as KEGG orthologos (KOs)

with a total of 6909 KOs across all hosts. Using these KOs with HUMAnN for metabolic

reconstruction detected 113 KEGG modules collectively present in all samples

(Supplementary Table 13). Among these modules, 20 were present across all samples at a

coverage of >90% and were identified as core modules (Table 2). The core modules were

found to be involved with the following Level 3 KEGG BRITE hierarchies: central

carbohydrate metabolism (6 modules), purine metabolism (2 modules), pyrimidine

metabolism (1 module), cofactor and vitamin biosynthesis (5 modules), ATP synthesis (1

module), photosynthesis (1 module), phosphate and amino acid transport system (2

modules), mineral and organic ion transport system (1 module), and aminoacyl tRNA (1

module). A "secondary" set of 37 modules were present at <90% coverage in no less than

one but no more than three sampled marmoset hosts (Supplementary Table 14).

Examples of secondary modules present across sampled individuals at Level 3 KEGG

BRITE hierarchies include: aromatic amino acid metabolism (2 modules), central

carbohydrate metabolism (4 modules), cofactor and vitamin biosynthesis (3 modules),

cysteine and methionine metabolism (2 modules), histidine metabolism (2 modules), and

mineral and organic ion transport system (2 modules).

Several KEGG modules were differently abundant for host taxonomy, hybrid

status, and environment (Figures 7-8, Supplementary Figures S3-S6). A total of 57

modules differed for taxa (Supplementary Figure S3 and S4), with *C. jacchus x C.*

penicillata hybrids having the largest number of differently abundant modules and *C.*

jacchus possessing the second highest number. Hybrids and non-hybrids showed a total

of 63 differentially abundance modules (Supplementary Figures S5 and S6), with the

former being overwhelmingly different in abundance of modules for metabolism of

nucleotides, carbohydrates, and amino acids. Differences among the three groups of host

environment were not particularly concentrated around certain categories but rather

spread out across clades of modules.

Discussion

Factors that Potentially Influence *Callithrix* Gut Microbiome Diversity

Our data showed that host hybrid status and environment more strongly shaped

Callithrix gut microbiome diversity than host taxon classification. While host taxa

differed significantly in microbial diversity measures, few pairwise taxa comparisons

were significant. The gut microbiome of hybrid *Callithrix* was significantly more diverse

that of non-hybrids. Captive marmosets had significantly less diverse gut microbiomes

than their wild and translocated counterparts. As observed in other NHPs, captive

marmosets showed the most reduced gut microbiome diversity in terms of species

richness and evenness. However, the strong "humanization" effect of captivity reported

for the gut microbiome of other NHPs was not entirely evident in our study.

Regarding hybridization effects on gut bacteria, changes in the hybrid gut

microbiome relative to parental species may cause negative epistasis between microbial

and chromosomal genes [10]. For example, *Nasonia* wasps and *Mus* mouse hybrids

possessed altered microbiomes relative to parental species and showed aberrant

expression of immune genes [10,11]. Further, *Nasonia* hybridization was lethal and *Mus*

hybridization resulted in higher histopathology of caecal tissue in hybrids relative to

parental species [10,11]. Aberrant immune gene expression in animal hybrids may make

them more susceptible to infectious disease than parental species, and alterations in the

gut microbiome due to hybridization may negatively affect hybrid fitness.

Anthropogenic *Callithrix* hybrids are fertile, tend to form hybrids swarms and are

frequently present in large Brazilian urban areas and rural landscapes [19, 57;

Malukiewicz, pers. obs.], and they possessed more diverse gut microbiomes than non-

hybrids. In some cases, hybridization may also lead to favorable physiological functions

that can drive adaptation, genetic novelty, or speciation [58]. Our data suggest show that

hybridization does not perturb microbial diversity in *Callithrix,* and increased diversity of

the gut microbiome may actually be favorable for hybrid host physiology, fitness, and

health. Thus, the connection between the gut microbiome and host functions should be

further studied in *Callithrix* hybrids to determine whether hybridization promotes host

health and fitness in specialized exudivores.

Considering host environment, the lack of a strong "humanization" effect of

captivity in *Callithrix* is likely related to differences in their dietary strategy as specialist

exudivores to that of other NHPs. *Callithrix* possesses morphological adaptations for

gouging gum from trees [59-61] and can spend more than 50% of their feeding time on

gums in the wild (e.g., *C. aurita* [62]; *C. jacchus* [63]). However, captive *Callithrix*

husbandry often omits gums from the marmoset diet or uses it as an enrichment

ingredient [26]. Regular provisioning of exudates also did not apply to captive and

translocated marmosets we sampled across four captive facilities, whose generalized

Callithrix diets are shown in Table 3. One concern for a lack of gum in the diet of captive

specialist exudivores is the development of health issues as well as a negative impact on

breeding and survivability [26, 64]. Thus, our results suggest that provisioning of gum in

the diet of captive specialized exudivores may improve host welfare and conservation

reintroduction programs by maintaining gut microbiomes closer to that of wild

populations.

Bacterial Composition and Abundance of the *Callithrix* Gut

Microbiome Relative to Other NHP and Mammals

380   We focus here on differences in composition and abundance of bacterial taxa in

wild, translocated, and captive *Callithrix* (Table 4), as host environment showed a

stronger effect on these aspects of the gut microbiome than host taxon classification and

hybrid status. In a single captive *C. jacchus* fecal sample, Albert et al. [30] found

Proteobacteria (37.1%), Firmicutes (33.0%), Bacteroidetes (28.1%), and Actinobacteria

(<0.04%) as the major gut microbiome phyla. Proteobacteria was also the most abundant

taxon among our captive and translocated hosts, although with a higher average

abundance per individual than that of [30]. For another NHP specialist exudivore, the

pygmy loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*), two wild individuals possessed Bacteroidetes

(41.19%), Proteobacteria (30.43%), and Actinobacteria (10.98%) as major gut

microbiome bacterial phyla [29]. Overall, these results suggest that Actinobacteria may

be a gut microbe typically present in wild specialist exudivores, while Proteobacteria and

Bacteroidetes are common in specialist exudivores regardless of environment.

393   The marmoset gut microbiome seems to differ in bacterial taxa abundance from

that of non-gummivores. In an early study of mostly captive NHPs and other mammals,

bacterial gut microbiome composition consisted of Firmicutes (65.7%), Bacteroidetes

(16.3%), Proteobacteria (8.8%), Actinobacteria (4.7%) and some less abundant taxa [65].

In another captive NHP sample, Provotella and Bacteroides were the most abundant gut

microbes, in line with the modern human gut microbiome [6]. In a recent large sampling

of mammals, including several NHPs, the gut microbiome of captive hosts was largely

characterized by Bacteroidetes, class Bacilli (Firmicutes), Gammaproteobacteria

(Proteobacteria), and class Verruco-5 (Verrucomicriobia) [9]. On the other hand,

Actinobacteria, Prevotella (Bacterioidetes), and class Clostridia (Firmicutes) were most

abundant for wild hosts [9].

The relatively higher abundances of gut Actinobacteria in our sampled wild

marmosets are notable. Within this phylum, *Bifidobacterium* was the most common

genus found across all host environments, but particularly among wild hosts. This

bacterial genus is common in animal gastrointestinal tracts and metabolizes host-

indigestible carbohydrates by aiding their importation into cells [30, 66]. The genomes of

three isolates of *Bifidobacterium callitrichos* from a captive *C. jacchus* fecal sample

contained predicted genes associated with galactose and arabinose metabolism, which are

major constituents of tree gums eaten by *C. jacchus* [30]. The relatively higher presence

of *Bifidobacterium* in wild marmosets within our dataset is likely associated with a higher

intake of tree gums by wild marmosets than in captivity- underlining the importance of

Bifidobacterium in marmoset carbohydrate metabolism and gummivory adaptations.

As several strains of Proteobacteria are pathogenic, the high occurrence of these

bacteria across our dataset is of note, particularly differences in Proteobacteria taxa

present between captive, translocated, and wild marmosets. Wild marmosets had an

average abundance of *Helicobacter* of 21% and <1% of Enterobacteriaceae. For

translocated marmosets, average abundance was 24% *Helicobacter* and 16%

Enterobacteriaceae while captive marmosets had 12% *Helicobacter* and 41%

Enterobacteriaceae. Previous studies have identified potentially pathogenic *Helicobacter*

strains in captive marmosets [67-69]. In humans, *Helicobacter* is thought to cause hepatic

or gastrointestinal disease [70]. However, marmosets infected with *Helicobacter* do not

necessarily show clinical symptoms [68], or may show clinical symptoms of gastric

disease but not be infected with *Helicobacter* [67, 69]. Enterobacteriaceae is frequently

associated with intestinal diseases and contains a number of pathogenic bacterial strains

of *Salmonella*, *Escherichia*, and *Shigella* [71, 72]. Although Enterobacteriaceae species

were not determined for our sample, potentially pathogenic Enterobacteriaceae were

previously found in captive and urban *Callithrix* [73]. Thus, future *Callithrix* microbiome

research should identify which Proteobacteria species are present in the *Callithrix* gut and

how close *Callithrix*-human contact affects the transmission host dynamics of these

bacteria.

Predictive Functional Aspects of the *Callithrix* Gut Microbiome

The principle core predictive functional KEGG modules expressed in all sampled

marmosets were related to central carbohydrate metabolism, purine metabolism,

pyrimidine metabolism, cofactor and vitamin biosynthesis, among other modules. Given

the differences in the principal bacterial taxa present in the gut of captive, translocated,

and wild marmosets, similar functions may be carried out by various bacteria despite

differences in host environment. Core predictive modules for carbohydrate metabolism

were involved with glycolysis and the pentose phosphate pathway, pathways essential for

the production of ATP and NADPH. For predictive cofactor and vitamin biosynthesis

modules, biosynthesized products included pantothenate, riboflavin, biotin as well as

NAD.

The gut microbiome of wild marmosets was particularly enriched for predictive

modules involved in carbohydrate metabolism including that of glycolysis and pentose

phosphate biosynthesis. While such modules are part of the core predictive functional

modules discussed above, they are over-represented in wild marmosets likely due to the

relatively high abundance of *Bifidobacterium* in their gut microbiome. Carbohydrate

metabolism was also the most abundant functional category present in the two wild

pygmy lories discussed above [29]. On the other hand, predictive functional KEGG

modules enriched in the gut microbiome of captive and translocated marmosets were

those involved in nucleotide and amino acid metabolism and environmental information

processing. Enrichment of these particular predictive modules in the gut microbiome of

captive and translocated marmosets may be related to their diets. Since gums were not a

normal part of the marmoset diet in any of the captive facilities we sampled, the

marmoset gut microbiome seems to have partially redirected functional and metabolic

activities to those that differ from the wild.

Conclusion

The results of this study have given us an initial genus-level look into the gut

microbiome of specialized exudivorous NHPs. Our major findings indicate that, just as in

other primates, the gut microbiome of *Callithrix* is sensitive to environmental factors, and

these findings likely apply more broadly to other NHP and non-NHP animal exudivores.

Marmosets are maintained in captivity for biomedical research [74], in zoological

collections, and as part of a recent conservation program in Brazil for *C. aurita* [32].

Several challenges arise in maintaining captive *Callithrix* such as marmoset wasting

syndrome [26], a rise in obesity in captive populations [75], and lack of a standardized

marmoset diet. Additionally, it is concerning that our results indicated a relatively large

abundance of Enterobacteriaceae in the gut microbiome of captive, but not wild,

marmosets. In the case of biomedical studies, data from unhealthy marmosets may bias

research findings, and captive-bred marmosets reintroduced into the wild may not be fit

to survive with gut microbiome profiles different from their wild counterparts.

Our findings also suggest that carbohydrate metabolism is a core function of the

Callithrix gut microbiome. Yet, although marmosets are specialized exudivores, there is a

wide gap between the nutritional intake of marmosets in the wild and captivity, where the

marmoset physiology for gummivory is generally not considered [26]. From an

evolutionary and health point of view, this disconnect between wild and captive

Callithrix diets leaves open several questions concerning maladaptation of the marmoset

digestive system, perturbation of gut microbiota, malabsorption of nutrients, and long

term health effects. As studies of the exudivore gut microbiome are generally rare, such

issues are also applicable to other captive NHPs that have evolved to exploit this

nutritional strategy. More studies are needed to understand better the health and

reproductive consequences of omitting a major component of the natural diet of

specialized exudivores in captivity.

To corroborate the findings of this study, future research should prospectively

investigate the specialized exudivore gut microbiome with a larger host sampling across

different taxa and environments, as well as through metagenomics and transcriptomics. A

systematic study of the effects of different diets on the marmoset gut microbiome,

including those with and without gum consumption, would facilitate understanding of

how nutrition affects marmoset health and particularly their gastrointestinal health. For

Callithrix, such data will add to our understanding of the evolution of marmosets as

exudivores, as well as help guide conservation efforts for *C. aurita* and *C. flaviceps*.

Overall, such information will expand baseline gut microbiome data available for wild

and translocated/captive specialized exudivores to allow for the development of new

tools to improve the management, welfare, and conservation of these animals.

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Conflict of Interests

505 The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Table 1. Host count distribution by taxon, hybrid status, and environment categories

Classification	Species	Hybrid	Captive	Translocated	Wild
C. aurita	10	0	5	3	2
C. geoffroyi	4	0	3	0	1
C. jacchus	9	0	9	0	0
C. penicillata	7	0	6	1	0
C. jacchus x *C. penicillata*	0	23	1	22	5
C. penicillata x *C. geoffroyi*	0	5	0	0	0
C. aurita x *Callithrix* sp.	0	1	0	1	0
Total	**30**	**29**	**24**	**27**	**8**

Table 2. Core predictive functional bacterial KEGG modules present among all sampled marmoset hosts at a coverage of >90%

Module ID	KEGG Module Definition	Level 3 KEGG Brite Category
M00001	Glycolysis (Embden-Meyerhof pathway), glucose => pyruvate	Central carbohydrate metabolism
M00002	Glycolysis, core module involving three-carbon compounds	Central carbohydrate metabolism
M00003	Gluconeogenesis, oxaloacetate => fructose-6P	Central carbohydrate metabolism
M00004	Pentose phosphate pathway (Pentose phosphate cycle)	Central carbohydrate metabolism
M00006	Pentose phosphate pathway, oxidative phase, glucose 6P => ribulose 5P	Central carbohydrate metabolism
M00007	Pentose phosphate pathway, non-oxidative phase, fructose 6P => ribose 5P	Central carbohydrate metabolism
M00049	Adenine nucleotide biosynthesis, IMP => ADP/dADP,ATP/dATP	Purine Metabolism<
M00050	Guanine ribonucleotide biosynthesis IMP => GDPGTP	Purine Metabolism<
M00051	Uridine_monophosphate biosynthesis glutamine + PRPP => UMP	Pyrimidine Metabolism
M00115	NAD biosynthesis aspartate => NAD	Cofactor and vitamin biosynthesis
M00119	Pantothenate biosynthesis valine/L-aspartate => pantothenate	Cofactor and vitamin biosynthesis
M00123	Biotin biosynthesis, pimeloyl-CoA => biotin	Cofactor and vitamin biosynthesis
M00125	Riboflavin biosynthesis, GTP => riboflavin/FMN/FAD	Cofactor and vitamin biosynthesis
M00126	Tetrahydrofolate biosynthesis, GTP => THF	Cofactor and vitamin biosynthesis
M00157	F-type ATPase, bacteria	ATP Synthesis
M00164	ATP synthase	Photosynthesis
M00222	Phosphate transport system	Phosphate and Amino Acid Transport System
M00229	Arginine transport system	Phosphate and Amino Acid Transport System
M00299	Spermidine/putrescine transport system	Mineral and Organic Ion Transport System
M00360	Aminoacyl-tRNA_biosynthesis prokaryotes	Aminoacyl tRNA

Table 3. List of captive diet collectively fed to marmoset hosts in sampled captive facilities

Fruits	Papaya, Orange, Banana, Apple, Pear, Avacado, Kiwi, Melon, Mango
Carbs	Sweet Potato, Potato, Beets
Veggies	Cucumber, Eggplant, Pumpkin, Chuchu, Cauliflower, Carrots
Proteins	Cooked Chicken, Cooked Egg

Table 4. Percentages of most abundant bacterial taxa present in marmoset hosts according to host environment.

Phylum	Captive (%)	Translocated (%)	Wild (%)
Actinobacteria	6	6	32
Bacteroidetes	8	20	17
Firmicutes	6	7	14
Proteobacteria	76	63	35

Figure 1. Natural *Callithrix* ranges and sampling locations in Brazil. Sampling locations
are represented by different colored shapes and species names are written next to their
respective ranges.

Figure 2. Boxplots of gut microbiome species alpha diversity by host taxon showing
Shannon diversity index (A), number of observed OTUs (B), and Pielou E evenness (C).
Classifications and color-coding along the x-axis are A/Red=*C. aurita*, AH=*C. aurita*
hybrid, G/Orange= *C. geoffroyi*, J/Green= *C. jacchus*, P/Yellow= *C. penicillata*,
JP/Purple= *C. jacchus* x *C. penicillata* hybrids, and PG/Blue= *C. penicillata* x *C.*
geoffroyi hybrids.

Figure 3. Boxplots of gut microbiome species alpha diversity by host hybrid status
showing Shannon diversity index (A), number of observed OTUs (B), and Pielou E
evenness (C). Classifications and color-coding along the x-axis are H/Red=hybrids and
P/Dark Blue=pure species.

Figure 4. Boxplots of gut microbiome species alpha diversity by host environment
showing Shannon diversity index (A), number of observed OTUs (B), and Pielou E
evenness (C). Classifications and color-coding along the x-axis are C/Red=captive,
T/Dark Blue=translocated, and W/Orange=wild.

Figure 5. PCoA of weighted Unifrac distances by host taxon (A), hybrid status (B) and
environment (C). Abbreviations and color codes in plot legends are the same as in
Figures 1-3.

Figure 6. Relative abundances of gut bacterial classes by environment. Each bar
represents a marmoset host, and hosts are classified as C (captive), T (translocated), and
W (wild). Colors within each bar represent the top 11 most abundant bacterial classes.
Black represents all other bacterial classes. Top colors represent greater bacterial relative
abundance than those taxa at the bottom of each bar.

Figure 7. HUMAnN metabolic reconstruction of marmoset fecal microbiome based on
host environment. The cladogram shows 3 KEGG BRITE hierarchical levels with an
outer, generalized level, and ending with the inner-level annotated by letters that are
detailed further in the accompanying legend. Circles not differentially abundant in any
species are clear.

Figure 8. Differentially abundant KEGG metabolic modules inferred by LEfSe are
colored by their associated environment classification, which follow the same
abbreviations as Figures 3. The plot shows LDA scores resulting from LeFSe analysis for
differentially abundant KEGG modules across host environment.

Supplementary Figure S1. (A). Relative abundances of gut bacterial classes by taxon (A).
Taxon abbreviations are the same as in Figure 1. (B) Relative abundances of gut bacterial
classes by hybrid status. Hybrid status abbreviations are the same as in Figure 2. In both
A and B, colors within each bar represent bacterial classes with top colors representing
greater bacterial relative abundance than those taxa at the bottom of each bar.

Supplementary Figure S2. Prediction plots of the top two balances for the OLE regression
model, with the prediction residuals from the model projected onto these two balances.

Supplementary Figure S3. HUMAnN metabolic reconstruction of marmoset fecal
microbiome based on host taxonomy. The cladogram shows 3 KEGG BRITE hierarchical
levels with an outer, generalized level, and ending with the inner-level annotated by
letters that are detailed further in the accompanying legend. Circles not differentially
abundant in any species are clear.

Supplementary Figure S4. Differentially abundant KEGG metabolic modules inferred by
LEfSe are colored by their associated taxon classification, which follow the same
abbreviations as Figure 1. The plot shows LDA scores resulting from LeFSe analysis for
differentially abundant KEGG modules across host taxon classifications.

Supplementary Figure S5. HUMAnN metabolic reconstruction of marmoset fecal
microbiome based on host hybrid status. The cladogram shows 3 KEGG BRITE
hierarchical levels with an outer, generalized level, and ending with the inner-level
annotated by letters that are detailed further in the accompanying legend. Circles not
differentially abundant in any species are clear.

Supplementary Figure S6. Differentially abundant KEGG metabolic modules inferred by
LEfSe are colored by their associated hybrid classification, which follow the same
abbreviations as Figure 3. The plot shows LDA scores resulting from LeFSe analysis for
differentially abundant KEGG modules across host hybrid status.

C. jacchus

C. penicillata

C. kuhlii

C. geoffroyi

C. flaviceps

C. aurita

Sampling Locations Legend

✳ Guarulhos Zoo, Guarulhos, SP
◯ CPRJ, Guapirim, RJ
■ Ilha d'Agua, Rio de Janeiro, RJ
■ SERCAS, Campos dos Goytacazes, RJ
▲ Berilo, MG
☐ Guiricema, MG
◇ Viçosa, MG
◯ CEMAFAUNA, Petrolina, PE