Gut Microbiota–Drug Interactions: Implications for Personalized Pharmacotherapy

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Abstract
The human gut microbiota has emerged as a critical regulator of drug metabolism, therapeutic efficacy, and adverse drug reactions, highlighting its pivotal role in personalized pharmacotherapy. Comprising trillions of microorganisms with diverse metabolic capabilities, the gut microbiome functions as an additional metabolic organ capable of biotransforming numerous therapeutic agents through enzymatic processes such as reduction, hydrolysis, deconjugation, and demethylation. These microbial activities can alter drug absorption, bioavailability, pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and toxicity, thereby contributing to significant inter-individual variability in treatment outcomes. This review provides a comprehensive overview of the bidirectional interactions between gut microbiota and drugs, emphasizing their implications for precision medicine and individualized therapeutic strategies. A systematic literature survey was conducted using peer-reviewed publications retrieved from major scientific databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, focusing on studies investigating microbiota-mediated drug metabolism, pharmacomicrobiomics, and microbiome-based therapeutic interventions. The review discusses the composition and physiological functions of the gut microbiota, the molecular mechanisms underlying microbial drug metabolism, and clinically significant interactions involving cardiovascular drugs, antidiabetic agents, anticancer therapies, antibiotics, central nervous system drugs, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Furthermore, recent advances in pharmacomicrobiomics, microbiome-derived biomarkers, artificial intelligence, multi-omics technologies, probiotics, prebiotics, synbiotics, and fecal microbiota transplantation are critically evaluated as emerging approaches for optimizing personalized pharmacotherapy. Despite substantial progress, several challenges, including inter-individual microbial variability, lack of standardized analytical methodologies, limited clinical validation, and regulatory constraints, continue to impede the clinical implementation of microbiome-guided therapy. Future research integrating microbiome profiling with pharmacogenomics, metabolomics, and artificial intelligence is expected to improve the prediction of drug response, minimize adverse drug reactions, and facilitate the development of precision medicine. Overall, gut microbiota–drug interactions represent a promising frontier in pharmaceutical sciences, offering new opportunities to enhance therapeutic efficacy and advance individualized patient care.

Keywords: Gut microbiota; Pharmacomicrobiomics; Personalized pharmacotherapy; Drug metabolism; Precision medicine.
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1. Introduction

The human gastrointestinal tract harbors a highly diverse and dynamic microbial ecosystem, collectively referred to as the gut microbiota, which comprises trillions of microorganisms, including bacteria, archaea, viruses, fungi, and protozoa. This complex microbial community functions as a metabolically active "virtual organ" that contributes significantly to host physiology by regulating

nutrient metabolism, maintaining intestinal barrier integrity, modulating immune responses, and synthesizing essential metabolites such as short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), vitamins, and amino acids. The dominant bacterial phyla in the healthy adult gut include Firmicutes, Bacteroidetes, Actinobacteria, Proteobacteria, and Verrucomicrobiota, each performing distinct metabolic and immunological functions [1]. The composition and functional diversity of the gut microbiota are influenced by multiple factors, including genetics, age, diet, lifestyle, environmental exposures, medication use, and disease conditions. An overview of the major gut microbial phyla and their physiological roles is summarized in Table 1.

Over the past decade, advances in next-generation sequencing, metagenomics, and metabolomics have transformed our understanding of the intricate relationship between the gut microbiota and human health. Alterations in microbial composition, commonly referred to as gut dysbiosis, have been associated with numerous disorders, including inflammatory bowel disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, neurological disorders, autoimmune diseases, and several malignancies[2]. Beyond their role in disease pathogenesis, intestinal microorganisms have emerged as important determinants of drug disposition and therapeutic response through their ability to metabolize xenobiotics and endogenous compounds. The interaction between drugs and the gut microbiota is bidirectional. While microorganisms can directly metabolize drugs through enzymatic reactions such as reduction, hydrolysis, dehydroxylation, decarboxylation, and deconjugation[3], many therapeutic agents simultaneously alter the composition and metabolic activity of the intestinal microbiome. These reciprocal interactions may influence drug absorption, bioavailability, efficacy, toxicity, pharmacokinetics, and pharmacodynamics, ultimately contributing to the considerable inter-individual variability observed in therapeutic outcomes. A schematic representation of these bidirectional interactions is presented in Figure 1.

Growing evidence indicates that microbial enzymes can either activate prodrugs into pharmacologically active metabolites or inactivate active drugs before systemic absorption[4]. In addition, microbial metabolism may generate toxic intermediates responsible for adverse drug reactions or alter enterohepatic circulation, thereby affecting drug exposure and therapeutic efficacy [4], [5] Consequently, two patients receiving the same medication at identical doses may exhibit markedly different clinical responses due to differences in their gut microbial composition and metabolic capacity[6]. These discoveries have led to the emergence of pharmacomicrobiomics, an interdisciplinary field that investigates how variations in the human microbiome influence drug response and how medications, in turn, modify microbial communities. Pharmacomicrobiomics complements pharmacogenomics by incorporating microbial variability as an additional determinant of personalized medicine [7]. Rather than relying solely on host genetic factors, this approach recognizes the gut microbiota as a modifiable contributor to treatment response and adverse drug reactions. The concept of personalized pharmacotherapy has gained considerable attention as healthcare increasingly shifts toward precision medicine. It aims to optimize drug selection, dosing strategies, and therapeutic monitoring according to individual biological characteristics, including genetic makeup, metabolic profile, lifestyle factors, and increasingly, the gut microbiome. The integration of microbiome-derived biomarkers with pharmacogenomic and clinical data has the potential to improve therapeutic efficacy, reduce toxicity, minimize adverse drug reactions, and support individualized treatment strategies across a wide range of diseases[4].

Despite substantial progress in understanding microbiota–drug interactions, several challenges remain[5]. The molecular mechanisms underlying microbial drug metabolism are not fully elucidated; standardized methodologies for microbiome analysis are lacking, and the clinical implementation of microbiome-guided therapy is still limited [8]. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of the gut microbiome, influenced by diet, antibiotics, probiotics, disease states, and environmental factors, complicates the prediction of individual drug responses[3], [9] Addressing these challenges will require multidisciplinary approaches integrating microbiology, pharmacology, bioinformatics, systems biology, and clinical medicine [10]. The present review provides a comprehensive overview of the current knowledge regarding gut microbiota–drug interactions and their implications for personalized pharmacotherapy. It discusses the composition and physiological functions of the gut microbiota, mechanisms of microbiota-mediated drug metabolism, clinically relevant drug–microbiome interactions, and emerging strategies for microbiome-guided precision medicine. Moreover, the review critically examines current challenges, research gaps, and future perspectives that may facilitate the integration of pharmacomicrobiomics into routine clinical practice.

Table 1. Human Gut Microbiota, Major Bacterial Phyla, Functions, and Clinical Significance

Major Bacterial Phylum	Representative Genera	Primary Functions	Clinical Significance
Firmicutes	Lactobacillus, Clostridium, Faecalibacterium, Ruminococcus	Fermentation of dietary fiber, production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), maintenance of gut barrier integrity, immune regulation [11]	Altered abundance is associated with obesity, type 2 diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and colorectal cancer
Bacteroidetes	Bacteroides, Prevotella, Parabacteroides	Degradation of complex carbohydrates, bile acid metabolism, vitamin synthesis, maintenance of intestinal homeostasis [11]	Dysbiosis has been linked to metabolic disorders, IBD, and gastrointestinal infections
Actinobacteria	Bifidobacterium, Collinsella	Carbohydrate metabolism, production of B vitamins, inhibition of pathogenic bacteria, immune modulation	Reduced abundance is associated with obesity, allergies, and gastrointestinal disorders; commonly used as probiotics[9]
Proteobacteria	Escherichia, Klebsiella, Enterobacter, Helicobacter	Nitrogen metabolism, opportunistic colonization, response to environmental stress	Overgrowth is considered a marker of gut dysbiosis and is associated with inflammatory diseases, infections, and metabolic disorders
Verrucomicrobiota	Akkermansia	Mucin degradation, maintenance of mucus layer, improvement of intestinal barrier function, metabolic regulation	Increased abundance is associated with improved metabolic health, enhanced insulin sensitivity, and reduced obesity risk[12]
Fusobacteriota	Fusobacterium	Amino acid fermentation and host interaction	High abundance has been associated with colorectal cancer, periodontal disease, and chronic inflammation
Spirochaetota	Treponema	Carbohydrate fermentation in specific populations	May contribute to fiber digestion; some species are associated with infectious diseases
Minor Gut Microbiota (Archaea, Fungi & Viruses)	Methanobrevibacter (Archaea), Candida (Fungi), Bacteriophages	Methane production, regulation of bacterial communities, maintenance of microbial ecosystem	Influence gut microbial diversity, metabolism, immune responses, and susceptibility to disease

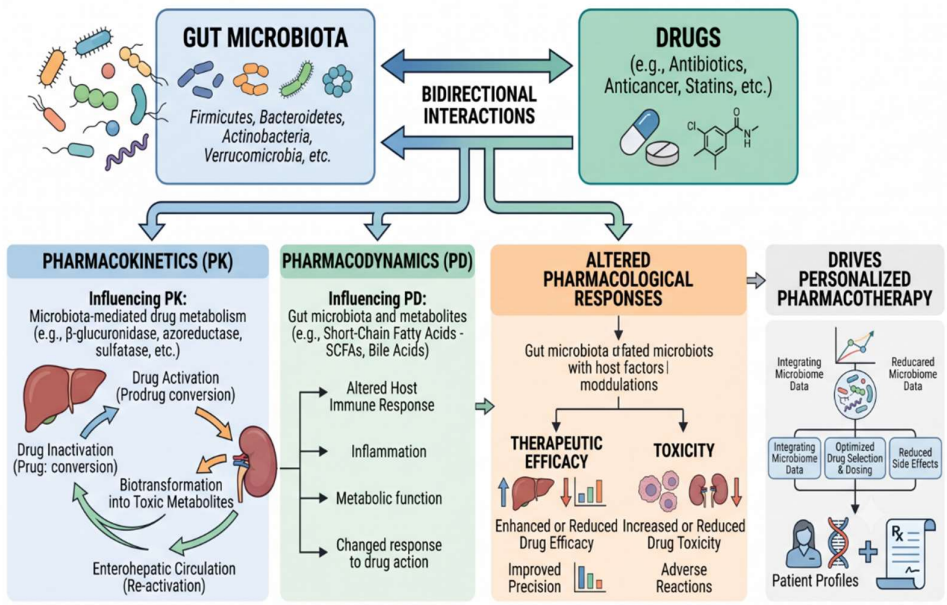

Figure 1. Bidirectional Interactions between Gut Microbiota and Drugs Influencing Personalized Pharmacotherapy

2. Gut Microbiota and Drug Metabolism

The gut microbiota plays a pivotal role in drug metabolism by influencing the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of numerous therapeutic agents. Beyond the metabolic activities of host enzymes, intestinal microorganisms possess a wide array of enzymatic systems capable of transforming drugs before their absorption into the systemic circulation. These microbial-mediated biotransformations can alter drug bioavailability, efficacy, toxicity, and therapeutic outcomes, thereby contributing to significant inter-individual variability in drug response. The composition of the gut microbiota and its metabolic capacity differ among individuals due to factors such as age, diet, genetics, disease status, medication use, and environmental influences, making the gut microbiome an important determinant of personalized pharmacotherapy[3], [13]

2.1 Gut Microbial Composition

The healthy human gut is predominantly colonized by bacteria belonging to the phyla Firmicutes, Bacteroidetes, Actinobacteria, Proteobacteria, and Verrucomicrobiota[14]. These microorganisms produce a variety of enzymes that participate in carbohydrate fermentation, bile acid metabolism, vitamin synthesis, and xenobiotic metabolism. The diversity and abundance of these microbial populations influence the metabolic fate of orally administered drugs and determine their pharmacological response[15].

2.2 Mechanisms of Microbiota-Mediated Drug Metabolism

Gut microorganisms metabolize drugs through several biochemical reactions, including reduction, hydrolysis, dehydroxylation, deconjugation, decarboxylation, acetylation, and demethylation [3], [5] These reactions may activate inactive prodrugs, inactivate active drugs, generate toxic metabolites, or modify drug bioavailability. Microbial β-glucuronidase enzymes are particularly important in enterohepatic circulation, where they deconjugate glucuronide metabolites excreted in bile, allowing drugs to be reabsorbed into the bloodstream. Similarly, azoreductases activate certain prodrugs such as sulfasalazine, whereas other microbial enzymes may inactivate drugs such as digoxin, reducing therapeutic efficacy [16], [17]

2.3 Factors Influencing Gut Microbiota–Drug Interactions

The extent of microbiota-mediated drug metabolism is influenced by multiple intrinsic and extrinsic factors[18]. Dietary habits alter microbial diversity and metabolite production, while aging is associated with reduced microbial richness and altered metabolic activity. Broad-spectrum antibiotics can disrupt the intestinal microbiome, leading to

impaired drug metabolism and increased susceptibility to opportunistic infections. Conversely, probiotics and prebiotics may restore microbial balance and improve therapeutic responses. Genetic background, disease conditions, lifestyle factors, and concomitant medications further contribute to inter-individual variability in microbiota composition and drug metabolism[5], [19], [20]

2.4 Analytical Approaches for Studying Gut Microbiota

Recent advances in sequencing technologies and bioinformatics have revolutionized the study of gut microbiota. 16S rRNA gene sequencing is widely used for identifying bacterial communities[21], whereas shotgun metagenomics provides detailed information on microbial genes involved in drug metabolism[22]. Metabolomics enables the identification of microbial metabolites associated with therapeutic responses[23], while transcriptomics and proteomics facilitate the investigation of gene expression and protein function[24]. The integration of these multi-omics approaches provides a comprehensive understanding of microbiota–drug interactions and supports the development of personalized therapeutic strategies[5]. The major gut microbial species involved in drug metabolism, their key metabolic enzymes, representative drugs, and pharmacological consequences are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Gut Microbial Species, Drug Targets, Metabolic Enzymes, and Their Effects on Drug Response

Gut Microorganism	Major Enzyme/Metabolic Activity	Representative Drug(s)	Effect on Drug Response
Eggerthella lenta	Cardiac glycoside reductase	Digoxin	Inactivates digoxin, reducing therapeutic efficacy
Bacteroides spp.	β-Glucuronidase	Irinotecan	Reactivates toxic metabolites, increasing gastrointestinal toxicity
Clostridium spp.	β-Glucuronidase	NSAIDs	Enhances enterohepatic recycling and may increase intestinal toxicity
Escherichia coli	β-Glucuronidase, Nitroreductase	Irinotecan, Nitrofurantoin	Alters drug metabolism and toxicity
Lactobacillus spp.	Bile salt hydrolase	Statins	Influences bile acid metabolism and drug absorption
Bifidobacterium spp.	Carbohydrate fermentation, SCFA production	Metformin	Improves glucose metabolism and therapeutic response
Enterococcus faecalis	Drug biotransformation enzymes	Levodopa	May reduce drug bioavailability through premature metabolism
Clostridioides difficile	Secondary bile acid metabolism	Antibiotics	Alters microbial balance following antibiotic therapy
Akkermansia muciniphila	Mucin degradation	Immune checkpoint inhibitors	Improves immunotherapy response
Gut microbial community	Azoreductase	Sulfasalazine	Converts inactive prodrug into active therapeutic metabolite

3. Clinical Implications of Gut Microbiota–Drug Interactions

The growing understanding of gut microbiota–drug interactions has revealed that intestinal microorganisms significantly influence the clinical response to numerous therapeutic agents[5]. By altering drug absorption, metabolism, distribution, efficacy, and toxicity, the gut microbiota contributes to inter-individual variability in treatment outcomes [19], [25] These interactions are particularly

important for drugs with a narrow therapeutic index or those requiring microbial activation or biotransformation. Consequently, understanding microbiota-mediated drug metabolism is essential for optimizing personalized pharmacotherapy.

3.1 Cardiovascular Drugs

The gut microbiota influences the therapeutic efficacy of several cardiovascular drugs. One of the best-characterized examples is digoxin, which is inactivated by Eggerthella lenta, resulting in reduced drug efficacy[5]. In addition, microbial metabolism of dietary nutrients can produce trimethylamine (TMA), which is converted in the liver to trimethylamine N-oxide (TMAO), a metabolite associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease[26]. These findings suggest that microbial composition may influence both drug response and cardiovascular health.

3.2 Antidiabetic Drugs

Metformin, the first-line treatment for type 2 diabetes mellitus, has been shown to modify the composition of the gut microbiota by increasing beneficial bacteria such as *Akkermansia muciniphila* and *Bifidobacterium* spp[27]. These microbial changes enhance glucose metabolism, improve insulin sensitivity, and contribute to the overall therapeutic efficacy of metformin[27]. Thus, part of metformin's clinical benefit is mediated through microbiota-dependent mechanisms.

3.3 Anticancer Agents

Gut microorganisms play a crucial role in the efficacy and toxicity of anticancer drugs. The microbial enzyme β-glucuronidase reactivates irinotecan metabolites in the intestine, leading to severe gastrointestinal toxicity[28]. Furthermore, recent studies have demonstrated that the composition of the gut microbiota influences the response to immune checkpoint inhibitors, with certain bacterial species enhancing antitumor immunity and improving treatment outcomes[29].

3.4 Antibiotics

Antibiotics profoundly alter gut microbial diversity, often resulting in dysbiosis. While they eliminate pathogenic microorganisms, they also reduce beneficial bacterial populations, which may impair drug metabolism and increase susceptibility to opportunistic infections such as *Clostridioides difficile*[30]. Long-term or repeated antibiotic use may therefore have lasting effects on both microbial composition and subsequent therapeutic responses.

3.5 Central Nervous System (CNS) Drugs

Emerging evidence indicates that the gut–brain axis plays an important role in the response to neurological and psychiatric medications. Certain gut bacteria metabolize levodopa, reducing its bioavailability before it reaches the central nervous system[5]. Similarly, microbial metabolites may influence the efficacy of antidepressants and other neuroactive drugs by modulating neurotransmitter synthesis and immune signaling [31].

3.6 Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs)

NSAIDs can disrupt the intestinal mucosal barrier and alter microbial composition, increasing the risk of gastrointestinal injury[5]. Conversely, microbial β-glucuronidase enzymes contribute to the enterohepatic recycling of NSAIDs, potentially enhancing intestinal toxicity[5]. These bidirectional interactions emphasize the importance of considering gut microbiota during NSAID therapy. Overall, the clinical consequences of gut microbiota–drug interactions include altered therapeutic efficacy, unexpected adverse drug reactions, drug resistance, and variability in pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic responses [5], [32], [33]. Representative examples of clinically significant microbiota–drug interactions are summarized in Table 3, while the major mechanisms influencing personalized therapeutic outcomes are illustrated in Figure 2.

Table 3. Clinically Important Gut Microbiota–Drug Interactions and Their Pharmacological Consequences

Drug/Class	Gut Microorganism	Mechanism of Interaction	Clinical Consequence
Digoxin	*Eggerthella lenta*	Drug reduction and inactivation	Decreased therapeutic efficacy[5]
Metformin	*Akkermansia muciniphila*, *Bifidobacterium* spp.	Modulation of gut microbiota composition	Improved glucose homeostasis and insulin sensitivity[27]

Irinotecan	*Bacteroides* spp., *Escherichia coli*	β-Glucuronidase-mediated reactivation	Increased gastrointestinal toxicity[34]
Sulfasalazine	Gut microbial community	Azoreductase-mediated activation	Conversion of prodrug into active metabolite[5]
Levodopa	*Enterococcus faecalis*	Premature microbial metabolism	Reduced drug bioavailability[35]
Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors	*Akkermansia muciniphila*, *Bifidobacterium* spp.	Immune modulation	Enhanced response to cancer immunotherapy[36]
NSAIDs	*Clostridium* spp., *Bacteroides* spp.	Enterohepatic recycling via β-glucuronidase	Increased intestinal toxicity[5]
Broad-spectrum Antibiotics	Multiple gut bacteria	Microbiota depletion and dysbiosis	Altered drug metabolism and increased infection risk[37]

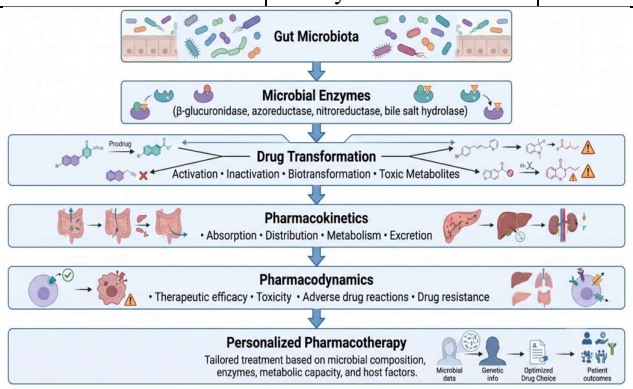

Figure 2. Mechanistic pathways illustrating the influence of gut microbiota on personalized pharmacotherapy.

4. Personalized Pharmacotherapy

The growing recognition of the gut microbiota as a critical determinant of drug response has transformed the conventional concept of personalized medicine. Traditionally, individualized therapy has focused primarily on host genetic variations, age, body weight, disease status, and organ function[5]. However, accumulating evidence indicates that the gut microbiome acts as an additional "metabolic organ" capable of influencing drug absorption, biotransformation, bioavailability, efficacy, and toxicity[5]. Consequently, integrating gut microbiota profiling into clinical decision-making has led to the emergence of pharmacomicrobiomics, an evolving discipline that investigates the influence of microbial composition and function on pharmacological outcomes [4], [38] Personalized pharmacotherapy based on microbiome characteristics offers a promising strategy for optimizing therapeutic efficacy while minimizing adverse drug reactions.

4.1 Pharmacomicrobiomics and Precision Medicine

Pharmacomicrobiomics extends the principles of pharmacogenomics by incorporating the gut microbiome as an important determinant of drug response. While pharmacogenomics evaluates variations in the host genome, pharmacomicrobiomics focuses on differences in microbial diversity, abundance, and metabolic activity that influence drug metabolism. Since the composition of the gut microbiota varies considerably among individuals, identical drug regimens may produce different therapeutic outcomes due to differences in microbial enzymatic activity. Recent advances in sequencing technologies have enabled researchers to identify microbial biomarkers associated with favorable or poor drug responses. These biomarkers can potentially predict treatment efficacy before therapy is initiated, allowing clinicians to select the most appropriate medication and dosage for individual patients. Consequently, microbiome-guided precision medicine has emerged as a promising approach for improving clinical outcomes across multiple therapeutic areas, including oncology, diabetes, cardiovascular medicine, and immunotherapy [39].

4.2 Microbiome Biomarkers for Personalized Therapy

The identification of microbiome-derived biomarkers has become a major focus of personalized pharmacotherapy. Specific bacterial

species and microbial metabolites have been associated with drug efficacy, toxicity, and treatment resistance. For example, the abundance of *Akkermansia muciniphila* has been correlated with improved responses to immune checkpoint inhibitors in cancer patients[40], whereas the presence of Eggerthella lenta influences digoxin metabolism and therapeutic efficacy[5]. Similarly, microbial metabolites such as short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), secondary bile acids, and trimethylamine N-oxide (TMAO) have demonstrated significant potential as predictive biomarkers for disease progression and drug response[41]. These biomarkers may facilitate patient stratification, therapeutic monitoring, and individualized treatment planning in future clinical practice.

4.3 Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) have become valuable tools for analyzing the highly complex interactions between gut microbiota and therapeutic agents. The enormous volume of microbiome sequencing data generated through metagenomics, transcriptomics, metabolomics, and proteomics requires advanced computational approaches capable of identifying clinically relevant patterns. Machine learning algorithms can integrate microbial composition, host genetic information, clinical parameters, and pharmacokinetic data to predict individual drug responses, identify adverse drug reactions, and optimize therapeutic regimens. AI-assisted predictive models are increasingly being investigated for personalized drug selection, dosage optimization, and treatment monitoring, representing an important advancement toward precision medicine [42]

4.4 Modulation of Gut Microbiota to Improve Drug Response

Since the gut microbiota is highly dynamic and modifiable, several therapeutic strategies have been proposed to optimize microbial composition and improve drug efficacy. These interventions aim to restore microbial balance, enhance beneficial bacterial populations, and reduce dysbiosis-associated treatment failure. Probiotics, consisting of beneficial live microorganisms such as Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium, have shown potential in improving gastrointestinal health, reducing inflammation, and enhancing the therapeutic efficacy of certain medications. Prebiotics are non-digestible dietary components that selectively stimulate the growth of beneficial gut microorganisms, thereby improving microbial diversity and metabolic function. Synbiotics, which combine probiotics and prebiotics, may provide synergistic benefits by simultaneously supplying beneficial microorganisms and promoting their growth within the gastrointestinal tract. Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT) has emerged as an innovative microbiome-based therapy involving the transfer of fecal microbiota from healthy donors to patients with severe dysbiosis. Although primarily used for recurrent *Clostridioides difficile* infection, FMT is currently being investigated for its potential to improve responses to immunotherapy, inflammatory bowel disease treatment, and metabolic disorders. Dietary interventions, including high-fiber diets, fermented foods, and polyphenol-rich foods, also contribute significantly to maintaining microbial diversity and may indirectly influence drug metabolism and therapeutic outcomes[43], [44]

4.5 Clinical Applications and Future Prospects

The integration of gut microbiota analysis into routine clinical practice has the potential to transform personalized medicine. Microbiome profiling may assist clinicians in predicting therapeutic efficacy, selecting appropriate medications, determining optimal dosages, preventing adverse drug reactions, and monitoring treatment outcomes. Such approaches could substantially improve the management of chronic diseases, including cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, neurological diseases, autoimmune conditions, and gastrointestinal illnesses. Despite these promising developments, several barriers remain before microbiome-guided pharmacotherapy can be widely implemented[5], [45] Standardized analytical methods, validated microbial biomarkers, large multicenter clinical trials, cost-effective sequencing technologies, and regulatory guidelines are still required[5]. Moreover, ethical considerations regarding microbiome data privacy and clinical interpretation must be carefully addressed[45], [46]. Current strategies aimed at modulating the gut microbiota to improve therapeutic outcomes are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Current Strategies for Modulating Gut Microbiota to Improve Therapeutic Outcomes

Strategy	Mechanism of Action	Clinical Benefits	Current Status
Probiotics	Restore beneficial bacterial populations	Improve gut health, reduce inflammation, enhance drug efficacy	Widely used clinically

Prebiotics	Stimulate growth of beneficial microorganisms	Increase microbial diversity and SCFA production	Established dietary intervention
Synbiotics	Combine probiotics and prebiotics	Synergistically improve microbial balance and therapeutic response	Increasing clinical application
Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT)	Restores healthy gut microbial ecosystem[47]	Effective against recurrent *Clostridioides difficile* infection; potential in cancer and IBD	Approved for selected indications; ongoing clinical trials[48]
Dietary Modification	Alters microbial composition through nutrition	Improves microbiota diversity and metabolic function	Strong supportive evidence
Precision Antibiotic Therapy	Selectively eliminates pathogenic bacteria	Reduces dysbiosis and preserves beneficial microbiota	Emerging therapeutic approach
Microbiome Biomarker-Based Therapy	Uses microbial signatures to guide drug selection	Personalized treatment and improved therapeutic efficacy	Experimental
AI-Driven Pharmacomicrobiomics	Predicts drug response using microbiome and clinical data	Optimized drug selection and dosage	Early-stage research

5. Challenges, Future Perspectives, and Research Gaps

Despite remarkable advances in understanding gut microbiota-drug interactions, the clinical application of pharmacomicrobiomics remains in its infancy. Numerous experimental and clinical studies have demonstrated that gut microorganisms influence drug metabolism, efficacy, toxicity, and therapeutic outcomes[5]; however, translating these findings into routine clinical practice remains challenging. The complexity of the gut microbiome, inter-individual variability, lack of standardized analytical methods, and limited clinical evidence continue to hinder the implementation of microbiome-guided personalized pharmacotherapy.

One of the major challenges is the substantial inter-individual variability in gut microbial composition[49]. Factors such as age, genetics, dietary habits, geographical location, lifestyle, disease conditions, antibiotic exposure, and environmental influences contribute to significant differences in microbial diversity among individuals[50]. As a result, the same medication may produce different pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic responses in different patients, making it difficult to establish universal microbiome-based therapeutic guidelines. Another important limitation is the lack of standardized methodologies for microbiome analysis. Various sequencing platforms, sample collection procedures, DNA extraction techniques, bioinformatic pipelines, and analytical approaches often generate inconsistent results across studies. This lack of methodological uniformity limits the reproducibility and comparability of research findings. Therefore, internationally accepted protocols for microbiome sampling, sequencing, data analysis, and interpretation are urgently needed to facilitate clinical translation.

Although several microbial species and metabolites have been proposed as biomarkers for predicting drug response, their clinical validation remains limited[51]. Most available evidence is derived from animal experiments or small observational studies, whereas large multicenter clinical trials are still scarce[51]. Consequently, robust validation studies are necessary before microbiome-derived biomarkers can be routinely incorporated into therapeutic decision-making. Another challenge involves the dynamic nature of the gut microbiome[52]. Unlike the human genome, the gut microbiota continuously changes in response to diet, medication, infections, environmental exposures, and disease progression[5]. These temporal fluctuations complicate the prediction of long-term therapeutic responses and necessitate repeated microbiome assessments during treatment. The integration of multi-omics technologies, including metagenomics, transcriptomics, proteomics, metabolomics, and pharmacogenomics, offers promising opportunities to better understand microbiota–drug interactions. Combining these datasets with artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) can facilitate the identification of predictive microbial biomarkers, improve drug response prediction, and support individualized

therapeutic strategies. Such computational approaches are expected to become increasingly important in the development of precision medicine [5], [53]

Future research should also focus on developing microbiome-targeted therapeutic interventions, including next-generation probiotics, engineered bacterial strains, prebiotics, synbiotics, bacteriophage therapy, and personalized fecal microbiota transplantation (FMT) [39]. These approaches may enhance drug efficacy, reduce adverse drug reactions, and restore microbial homeostasis in patients with dysbiosis. From a regulatory perspective, clear guidelines are required for the clinical use of microbiome-based diagnostics and therapeutics. Regulatory agencies must establish standardized quality control measures, safety assessment protocols, and ethical frameworks for microbiome data management and patient privacy. In addition, interdisciplinary collaboration among microbiologists, pharmacologists, clinicians, bioinformaticians, and regulatory authorities will be essential for accelerating the clinical adoption of pharmacomicrobiomics [3], [54], [55]Overall, future investigations should prioritize large-scale longitudinal studies, standardized analytical methodologies, mechanistic research, and clinical validation to fully realize the potential of gut microbiota-guided personalized pharmacotherapy. The current challenges, research gaps, and future directions are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Current Challenges, Research Gaps, and Future Directions in Gut Microbiota–Drug Interaction Research

Research Area	Current Challenges	Future Directions
Gut microbiome variability	High inter-individual differences due to diet, age, genetics, and environment[49]	Develop personalized microbiome-based therapeutic strategies
Standardization	Lack of uniform protocols for sampling, sequencing, and bioinformatics[56]	Establish internationally standardized methodologies
Clinical validation	Limited large-scale clinical trials and validated biomarkers[57]	Conduct multicenter randomized clinical studies
Mechanistic understanding	Incomplete knowledge of microbial metabolic pathways[1]	Integrate metagenomics, metabolomics, transcriptomics, and proteomics
Biomarker discovery	Limited predictive microbial biomarkers[58]	Identify and validate robust microbiome-based biomarkers
Artificial intelligence	Limited integration of AI into clinical pharmacology[59]	Develop AI-assisted models for predicting drug response
Therapeutic interventions	Limited evidence for microbiome-targeted therapies[57]	Advance probiotics, synbiotics, engineered microbes, and FMT
Regulatory framework	Lack of clear international guidelines[57]	Develop regulatory standards for microbiome-based diagnostics and therapeutics
Data integration	Fragmented microbiome and clinical datasets[58]	Implement multi-omics platforms and systems pharmacology approaches
Precision medicine	Limited clinical implementation of pharmacomicrobiomics[57]	Incorporate microbiome profiling into routine personalized pharmacotherapy

6. Conclusion

The gut microbiota has emerged as a crucial determinant of drug metabolism and therapeutic response, profoundly influencing the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of numerous medications. Through diverse enzymatic activities and the production of bioactive metabolites, intestinal microorganisms can activate, inactivate, or transform drugs, thereby affecting their efficacy, bioavailability, and toxicity. These bidirectional interactions contribute significantly to inter-individual variability in treatment outcomes and emphasize the importance of considering the gut microbiome as an integral component of personalized medicine. Recent advances in pharmacomicrobiomics, high-throughput sequencing, multi-omics technologies, and artificial intelligence have substantially improved our understanding of microbiota–drug interactions. Emerging evidence indicates that microbiome profiling and microbial biomarkers can support

individualized drug selection, optimize dosage regimens, predict therapeutic responses, and reduce adverse drug reactions[5]. In addition, microbiota-modulating strategies such as probiotics, prebiotics, synbiotics, dietary interventions, and fecal microbiota transplantation offer promising opportunities to enhance treatment efficacy and restore microbial homeostasis. Despite these advances, several challenges remain before microbiome-guided pharmacotherapy can be routinely implemented in clinical practice. Variability in microbial composition, limited mechanistic understanding, lack of standardized analytical methods, insufficient large-scale clinical trials, and regulatory uncertainties continue to restrict clinical translation[5]. Addressing these limitations through multidisciplinary collaboration, standardized methodologies, and robust clinical validation will be essential for the successful integration of pharmacomicrobiomics into healthcare. In conclusion, the gut microbiota represents a promising frontier in precision medicine. A deeper understanding of microbiota–drug interactions, combined with advances in microbiome science and computational technologies, has the potential to transform conventional pharmacotherapy into truly personalized treatment strategies. Continued research in this rapidly evolving field expected to facilitate the development of safer, more effective, and patient-specific therapeutic interventions, ultimately improving clinical outcomes and advancing the future of personalized pharmacotherapy.

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