

## Microbiome of rural populations distinctly different, more 'diverse' than in Western populations

The study of the human microbiome—the motley assortment of microbes that live in our bodies—has largely been the study of the *Western* microbiome. The research has been heavily biased towards people from Europe, North America, and other WEIRD countries—that is, Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic. It's like trying to understand how cities work by studying London and New York, and ignoring Mumbai, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Cairo, and others.

Recognising this problem, scientists are starting to catalogue the microbes of rural populations, including hunter-gatherers. Studies have generally found similar trends: rural guts usually harbour microbes that aren't found in Western guts, and are generally more diverse.

[Now published](#) the results of a study on rural populations of Peru found that people who lead traditional lifestyles—both Matsigenka hunter-gatherers and Tsimane farmers—had higher levels of *Treponema*, a group that includes the species responsible for syphilis and yaws, than a comparable group of Americans. By studying these strains in detail, the team showed that they are distinct from those that cause human diseases, and more closely related to those that help other animals to digest carbohydrates.

**Read full, original article:** [Surprises Emerge As More Hunter-Gatherer Microbiomes Come In](#)