

Hidden half of us: 'You're more microbe than you are human'

More than half of your body is not human, say scientists. Human cells make up only 43% of the body's total cell count. The rest are microscopic colonists. Understanding this hidden half of ourselves – our microbiome – is rapidly transforming understanding of diseases from allergy to Parkinson's.

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This includes bacteria, viruses, fungi and archaea (organisms originally misclassified as bacteria). The greatest concentration of this microscopic life is in the dark murky depths of our oxygen-deprived bowels. Prof Rob Knight, from University of California San Diego, told the BBC: "You're more microbe than you are human."

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It would be naive to think we carry around so much microbial material without it interacting or having any effect on our bodies at all. Science is rapidly uncovering the role the microbiome plays in digestion, regulating the immune system, protecting against disease and manufacturing vital vitamins.

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Dr [Trevor] Lawley says there's growing evidence that repairing someone's microbiome "can actually lead to remission" in diseases such as ulcerative colitis, a type of inflammatory bowel disease. And he added: "I think for a lot of diseases we study it's going to be defined mixtures of bugs, maybe 10 or 15 that are going into a patient." Microbial medicine is in its early stages, but some researchers think that monitoring our microbiome will soon become a daily event that provides a brown goldmine of information about our health.

Read full, original post: [More than half your body is not human](#)