The effect of age on the intestinal mucus thickness, microbiota composition and immunity in relation to sex in mice

A mucus layer covers and protects the intestinal epithelial cells from direct contact with microbes. This mucus layer not only prevents inflammation but also plays an essential role in microbiota colonization, indicating the complex interplay between mucus composition-microbiota and intestinal health. However, it is unknown whether the mucus layer is influenced by age or sex and whether this contributes to reported differences in intestinal diseases in males and females or with ageing. Therefore, in this study we investigated the effect of age on mucus thickness, intestinal microbiota composition and immune composition in relation to sex. The ageing induced shrinkage of the colonic mucus layer was associated with bacterial penetration and direct contact of bacteria with the epithelium in both sexes. Additionally, several genes involved in the biosynthesis of mucus were downregulated in old mice, especially in males, and this was accompanied by a decrease in abundances of various Lactobacillus species and unclassified Clostridiales type IV and XIV and increase in abundance of the potential pathobiont Bacteroides vulgatus. The changes in mucus and microbiota in old mice were associated with enhanced activation of the immune system as illustrated by a higher percentage of effector T cells in old mice. Our data contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between mucus-microbiota-and immune responses and ultimately may lead to more tailored design of strategies to modulate mucus production in targeted groups.
Correlation of the allergenicity and tolerogenicity of two cow's milk protein products with intestinal uptake

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Establishing methods to evaluate intestinal uptake of food proteins
Tarmens mikroflora og spædbørns komælkstolerance skal undersøges

Microbiota and cow's milk tolerance

Cow’s milk allergy is a health problem of growing concern for which reason efficient strategies for the prevention is urgently needed. In recent years it has been demonstrated that the gut microbiota composition influences the development of allergy. However, our knowledge about how the microbiota composition influences the sensitising or tolerance inducing capacities of the food is only scarcely described. The objectives of this project are: (1) to increase our knowledge about the interplay between food proteins and the gut microbiota, and how this interplay impact on induction of cow’s milk allergy versus tolerance, and (2) in a broader perspective to gain knowledge about mechanisms influenced by microbiota, which drives the immune system towards allergy or tolerance.

Intact whey, which is one fraction of cow’s milk often used for infant formula, and enzymatic hydrolysed products hereof, used for hypoallergenic infant formulas, will used as model protein ingredients. The interplay between whey-based ingredients and the gut microbiota will be investigated in in vitro fermentation studies based on faecal samples from food allergic and healthy infants, as well as in animal studies in which the gut microbiota is manipulated by antibiotics treatment. Microbial composition will be analysed by 16S rRNA gene sequencing in combination with quantitative real-time PCR. The allergy or tolerance inducing capacity of the different whey-based ingredients and the influence of the gut microbiota composition will be analysed by evaluating different serological and cell based end-points. Appropriate functional in vitro, in vivo and ex vivo assays will be applied to investigate the mechanism by which the gut microbiota and metabolites hereof impact on directing the immune system towards allergy or tolerance.

National Food Institute

Research Group for Gut Microbiology and Immunology

Arla Foods Ingredients Group P/S

Period: 01/01/2016 → 31/12/2018

Number of participants: 4

Milk allergy, tolerance, infant formulas, gut microbiota

Number of related Ph.D. students: 1

Project participant:

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Project
Microbiota and cow's milk tolerance

National Food Institute
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