Reference reagents could be first step to standardizing microbiome studies

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Abstract

Much like the organisms that flood its instruments the microbiome research community is thriving. But researchers from the UK's National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) say that it could be doing even better. They've developed the first reference reagents for microbiome DNA analysis, Gut-Mix-RR and Gut-HiLo-RR. It's a move designed to promote standardization and reproducibility across the field of microbiome research as tests revealed drastic variations across shotgun sequencing taxonomic profilers, which could alter conclusions about interactions between different microbes . If researchers can reach a consensus on acceptable levels of errors and begin using the materials in their labs the reference reagents could help standardize downstream gut microbiome analyses. A large open-invite collaborative study for multiple laboratories is slated for later in 2020.