

uBiome project seeking to sequence the human microbiome

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(Medical Xpress)—Three health researchers have set up a project called [uBiome](#), on the crowd sourcing site indiegogo, with the aim of sequencing the human microbiome—microbes that live on and in the human body. The purpose of the project is to create the largest database ever of microbe samples taken from volunteers around the world and to use that data to learn more about the human microbiome and how it impacts health. Thus far the project has received pledges of more than triple the \$100,000 initial target goal.

As the researchers note on their project site, every one of us carries trillions of [microbes](#) in and on our bodies—they outnumber [human cells](#) by a factor of 10 to 1. And while scientists have begun to understand the

role some of these microbes play in human existence and health, there is still a lot yet to be learned. For that reason, this team of researchers has created the uBiome project—a means to enlist thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of people as volunteer partners in a grand [citizen science project](#). Those interested are asked to send a [monetary donation](#). In return, they will receive a kit in the mail that will allow them to take samples of microbes from five body areas: ears, nose, mouth, [genitals](#) and gut (via [stool sample](#)). When the kit is sent back to the lab, the samples are analyzed and the person who donated them can then go online to see what was found. In addition, they can see how their microbiome samples compare to others who take part in the project as well. Study and sequencing of the samples will take place at a lab at the University of California in San Francisco. Those who participate are given the choice of having their data remain private or having it shared with the world at large, though all are urged to choose the latter as it will help provide a better sample size.

The three researchers, who call themselves [young scientists](#), are: Jessica Richman, Zachary Apte and William Ludington. Apte and Ludington are recent doctoral graduates and Richman is soon to be one as well. The team has also set up a five member advisory board with people well established in the field. All involved hope that the project will help provide new insight into the relationship between people and their own unique microbiome, which it is hoped, may lead to new discoveries about such ailments as Crohn's disease, colitis, diabetes, etc. and how to cure them.

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