

Traditional Chinese medical herb may offer new anti-obesity strategy

November 21 2019



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Overweight and obesity have become a severe public health problem around the world. Current anti-obesity strategies are mainly aimed at restricting calorie intake and absorption. Now, Chinese scientists suggest in a new study that burning energy by activation of brown adipose tissue (BAT) might be an alternative strategy for combating obesity.

The researchers found that an extract from ginseng, a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) herb, can induce *Enterococcus faecalis*, which can produce an unsaturated long-chain fatty acid (LCFA)—myristoleic acid (MA).

"As a novel anti-obesity probiotic, *E. faecalis* and MA can reduce adiposity via BAT activation and beige fat formation," said Jin Wanzhu, lead author of the study and a scientist at the Institute of Zoology of the Chinese Academy of sciences.

Previous studies have shown that BAT facilitates weight control and generates a potent anti-obesity effect. Therefore, increasing BAT activity could be a novel and effective therapeutic approach for obesity and its related diseases, said Jin.

This is the first proof that the *E. faecalis* LCFA (specifically MA) axis can reduce obesity by increasing BAT activity and beige fat formation.

"This study demonstrates the important role of MA in reducing [obesity](#) and improving related metabolic syndrome, as well as its tremendous application prospects," said Jin.

More information: Lin-Hu Quan et al, Myristoleic acid produced by enterococci reduces obesity through brown adipose tissue activation, *Gut* (2019). [DOI: 10.1136/gutjnl-2019-319114](https://doi.org/10.1136/gutjnl-2019-319114)

Provided by Chinese Academy of Sciences

Citation: Traditional Chinese medical herb may offer new anti-obesity strategy (2019, November 21) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-11-traditional-chinese-medical-herb-anti-obesity.html>

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