The Ethics of Fecal Microbiota Transplant (FMT) Therapy for Obesity

Clare Goggins

ACADEMIC PAPER

ABSTRACT: Last semester I conducted a literature review which investigated the relationship between the human gut microbiota and obesity. I found that the gut microbiota of obese individuals have lower genetic richness and a greater proportion of the phylum Firmicutes compared to the gut microbiota of lean individuals (Feehley and Nagler, 2014). With this information, I began to postulate novel treatments for obesity, which led to the creation of a grant proposal for a phase I clinical trial (intended as a thought exercise and not for actual use, at least not currently). The goal of this clinical trial will be to determine whether the transfer of gut microbiota from lean to obese individuals via fecal microbiota transplant (FMT) is a feasible and effective method for reducing obesity. The aim of this paper is to serve as a bioethical defense of the clinical trial that I have proposed, in addition to serving as a platform for raising questions about the potential bioethical issues that may arise as a result of FMT therapy for obesity becoming commonplace in the future.

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MAJOR: Biology of Global Health
FACULTY MENTOR: Anne Rosenwald