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Microbiota

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The microbiota is the set of microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, archaea, viruses and parasites) residing in our bodies. These microorganisms may be classified as commensal, mutualistic or pathogenic, depending on their behaviour. The term microbiome refers to the entire habitat, including the microorganisms, their genes and the environmental conditions. However, in practice, the two terms are used interchangeably as the suffix -biome (community) and the suffix -oma (set) are conflated.

Knowledge of the human microbiota has expanded considerably since the introduction of next-generation sequencing techniques based on the gene that encodes the rRNA 16S subunit (16S rRNA encoding gene). This progress has brought about a genuine revolution in the knowledge of the composition of the microbiota and of its involvement in the states of health and disease of human beings.

The scientific document in this procedure details the different bacterial ecosystems that may be found in the human body and the existing scientific evidence of their role in different diseases. It also describes the process of faecal microbiota transplant, which is particularly used to treat recurrences of diarrhoea caused by *Clostridium difficile*, and the methodological foundations of the new molecular techniques used to characterise the microbiota.

The procedure also features 3 technical documents including the information needed to perform the techniques of metabolomics, metataxonomics and faecal microbiota transplant.

The development of all these matters may be consulted in SEIMC microbiological procedure number 59: "Microbiota" (2nd edition, 2016) (www.seimc.org/protocolos/microbiologia).

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