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# 肠道微生物调控动物精液品质及生殖性能的研究进展

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**摘要** 肠道微生物与雄性宿主之间存在复杂的动态平衡,与宿主局部肠道的相互作用会影响睾丸、肾脏、副性腺等远端器官的生理功能,从而调控宿主的精液品质。本文以“肠道-睾丸轴”为理论框架,综述肠道微生物对雄性动物精液品质和生殖性能的影响机制。通过调节代谢产物(短链脂肪酸、氨基酸及维生素)以及雄激素代谢,影响精液品质,或者释放信号分子(5-羟色胺、 $\gamma$ -氨基丁酸、一氧化氮和硫化氢)调节雄性生殖功能。未来研究应着重解析肠道微生物如何维持肠道稳态来调控动物精液品质,并开发具有调控雄性生殖功能的复合微生态制剂,以推动畜牧业高效育种的发展。

**关键词** 肠道微生物;精液品质;代谢底物;信号分子;生殖性能

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近年来,肠道微生物群作为“第二基因组”在宿主生理调控中的核心作用备受关注。研究表明,肠道微生物与雄性生殖系统间存在密切的“肠-睾丸轴”互作网络,揭示其对雄性生殖功能的影响<sup>[1]</sup>。高丰度的拟杆菌属和普雷沃氏菌属会导致宿主的精子活力降低,疣微菌科丰度的改变可导致胆汁酸水平降低,最终导致精子发生障碍和生精细胞受损<sup>[2-3]</sup>,以及菌群失衡导致有害物质(氨、 $H_2S$ )过量进而导致动物精液品质下降<sup>[4]</sup>。然而,尽管有研究证实肠道微生物能够调控猪<sup>[5]</sup>、绵羊<sup>[6]</sup>和小鼠<sup>[7]</sup>等动物的精液品质,但关于肠道微生物如何跨器官调控雄性生殖功能的具体机制仍存在诸多盲区。因此,本文以“肠道-睾丸轴”为理论框架,系统综述肠道微生物群通过代谢产物(短链脂肪酸、氨基酸等)和信号分子(5-羟色胺、硫化氢等)途径影响精子生成,明确动物肠道微生物对精液品质的影响及作用机制,通过调节动物肠道稳态,改善动物精液品质,旨在为理解肠道微生物与雄性生殖健康之间的复杂关系提供新的视角。

## 1 利用肠道微生物调节动物精液品质

肠道菌群在维持动物生殖健康中起着重要作用。研究发现,肠道菌群失调可能会导致精子发生

受损和精子活力下降<sup>[2]</sup>。例如,每天饲喂250 mg/kg体质量的草甘膦诱导大鼠肠道菌群失调导致雄性生殖功能障碍,表现为睾丸损伤、精子活力下降和精子畸形率增加;肠道微生物测序结果发现,草甘膦使肠道内拟杆菌门和厚壁菌门的相对丰度显著改变,普雷沃氏菌属和拟杆菌属丰度的增加与精子质量呈负相关<sup>[8]</sup>。在饮水中添加氟化物(100 mg/L)和砷(50 mg/L)导致大鼠睾丸自噬通量改变和肠道菌群失衡,表现为睾丸损伤,垂体促性腺激素水平(FSH和LH)和睾酮水平降低,精子数量减少<sup>[9]</sup>。雄性小鼠长期自由摄取乙醇(含量99%)会引起肠道菌群失调,进而产生代谢紊乱、血清内毒素和炎症细胞因子水平升高、睾丸炎症和相关基因表达异常,导致精子质量下降<sup>[10]</sup>。

大量研究证明在动物日粮中添加膳食添加剂可以改善肠道菌群失调,从而提高雄性生殖功能。例如,在公猪日粮中添加0.6 g/kg膳食纤维能够改变肠道微生物群组成并促进短链脂肪酸的产生,从而增强精子发生以及改善精子活力<sup>[11]</sup>。对精液利用率存在差异的杜洛克公猪肠道微生物进行分析后发现,精液利用率与瘤胃球菌科和鞘氨醇的丰度呈负相关,推测公猪精子质量高可能与瘤胃球菌科丰度降低有关<sup>[12]</sup>。这与Li等<sup>[13]</sup>在杜洛克公猪上的研究结

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果一致,即杜洛克猪精子活力最强,与 *Rikenellaceae* 属的相对丰度最高呈显著相关。在小鼠无精子症模型中,添加 10 mg/kg 体质量的海藻酸盐低聚糖(AOS)可以增加肠道中拟杆菌属和乳杆菌科,以及减少脱硫弧菌科,从而缓解精子损伤<sup>[14]</sup>。采用 0.1 mg/kg 体质量的板栗多糖(CPs)饲喂小鼠能够改善白消安(Busulfan)诱导的肠道微生物群组成紊乱,小肠结构和肠道菌群组成发生改变,以及生精小管中的生殖细胞数量显著增加<sup>[15]</sup>。在 1 型糖尿病(T1D)小鼠模型中,饲喂 10 mg/kg 体质量的海藻酸盐低聚糖并进行粪便微生物群移植(FMT)能够改变其生育能力,且肠道微生物测序结果发现,海藻酸盐低聚糖能够改善 T1D 小鼠紊乱的肠道微生物群,尤其是小肠乳酸菌,并增加多不饱和脂肪酸(如 DHA 和 EPA)的产生,从而增强精子发生和改善精液质量<sup>[16]</sup>。研究表明,添加山茱萸(100 mg/(kg·d))可以调节小鼠肠道菌群,从而减轻糖尿病(DM)诱导的睾丸损伤,提高精子活力和数量,逆转肠道菌群分布的变化,降低魏氏菌属、梭状芽孢杆菌属、罗斯氏菌属、厌氧棍状菌属等<sup>[17]</sup>。

益生菌通过增加有益菌(如双歧杆菌、乳酸杆菌)数量、抑制有害菌(如梭状芽孢杆菌)生长,优化菌群结构,并激活免疫细胞以维持肠道稳态,从而改善精液品质。例如,在犬的日粮中添加鼠李糖杆菌改善精子运动参数、活力、DNA 和顶体完整性以及形态;精子参数与放线菌门、异杆菌属、考拉杆菌属、链杆菌属的相对丰度呈正相关,与粪杆菌属和链球菌属的相对丰度呈负相关<sup>[18]</sup>。而鼠李糖杆菌和植物乳杆菌协同作用可逆转小鼠肠道微生物群的破坏,促进精原干细胞的增殖,从而减轻睾丸结构和功能障碍<sup>[19]</sup>。口服益生菌(乳酸菌,双歧杆菌和肠球菌)能够改善聚苯乙烯微塑料诱导的生精功能障碍和肠道菌群失调,表现为增加乳酸菌丰度,降低普雷沃氏菌丰度<sup>[20]</sup>。每天将 2  $\mu$ L/g 芽孢杆菌灌胃于黄曲霉毒素 B<sub>1</sub>(AFB<sub>1</sub>)暴露的小鼠中,能够显著提高 AFB<sub>1</sub> 降解率,减轻肿瘤坏死因子(TNF)通路和增殖相关信号通路(PI3K-AKT)通路与睾丸炎症相关通路的异常,表明芽孢杆菌通过降解 AFB<sub>1</sub> 而改善肠-睾丸轴损伤<sup>[21]</sup>。肠道微生物群失衡不但无法为生殖系统提供营养分子和支持,而且会产生促炎因子和氧化环境,破坏睾丸中的精子生成过程<sup>[22]</sup>。这些研究结果表明微生物群和精液质量之间存在相关性。然而,这些研究缺乏对已鉴定的关键微生物的功能验证,未来

研究需确定与精液质量相关的关键细菌菌株,进行针对性研究,从而改善精液品质。

综上所述,肠道菌群失调会使精子受损,从而导致动物精液质量下降。通过补充膳食添加剂和益生菌可以改善肠道菌群失衡,缓解雄性动物生殖功能障碍。因此,通过维持肠道菌群稳态来提高动物繁殖性能,或许能为畜牧业发展提供新的思路。

## 2 肠道微生物调控动物精液品质的机制

### 2.1 肠道微生物通过代谢底物调控动物精液品质

肠道菌群在动物肠道中经历复杂而活跃的代谢活动,为机体提供生长繁殖所需的能量和营养。肠道菌群的代谢底物主要来源于动物机体无法或来不及消化的食物、肠上皮细胞分泌的内源性黏液,在肠道菌群的作用下生成许多有益的代谢底物,如短链脂肪酸、氨基酸和维生素等,在精子发生中起着至关重要的作用。

1)短链脂肪酸。肠道菌群可以产生  $\omega$ -3 多不饱和脂肪酸(PUFA)和二十二碳五烯酸(DPA),PUFA 主要影响精子膜稳定性、精子活力、顶体反应和性激素合成,增加睾丸细胞的抗炎和抗氧化能力<sup>[23]</sup>。肠道菌群的主要代谢底物是短链脂肪酸(SCFAs),包含乙酸、丙酸和丁酸<sup>[24]</sup>。改善肠道微生物群组成可以刺激 SCFAs 的产生,从而增强精子发生和提高精液质量。研究表明,由肠道微生物群释放或诱导的丁酸盐会增加育龄男性睾酮水平和间质细胞数量<sup>[25]</sup>。酪氨酸梭菌(CBUT)产生的丁酸盐恢复了血睾屏障(BTB)的完整性,并使细胞黏附蛋白水平正常化,在睾丸内分泌功能的调节中发挥作用<sup>[26]</sup>。丁酸盐作为组蛋白脱乙酰酶(HDAC)的有效抑制剂参与调节大鼠的精子运动,并且是精子发生中减数分裂后过渡期间转录程序的关键调节因子<sup>[27-28]</sup>。丁酸盐在氧化还原平衡中起着重要作用,这对小鼠的精子发生非常重要<sup>[29]</sup>。研究表明,在成年公鸡的饮食中添加丁酸钠可以增强抗氧化能力和睾酮分泌,从而提高精液量和精子活力<sup>[30]</sup>。肠道微生物产生的短链脂肪酸(SCFAs)对精液品质影响的研究尚存局限。尽管已证实 SCFAs 如丁酸盐能增强精子发生、提高睾酮水平并改善精液质量,但其具体作用机制、与其他肠道代谢物的相互作用及对精液品质的直接影响仍需深入研究。此外,SCFAs 在精液品质调节中的长期效应及最佳剂量也需进一步确定。总之,



SCFAs不仅可作为肠道能量供给的重要来源,还可作为宿主代谢水平的信号分子。研究表明,人体内SCFA的水平越低,胰岛素抵抗程度就越高,而胰岛素抵抗指数与精液量、前向运动精子百分率呈负相关<sup>[31]</sup>。由此可见,肠道菌群可介导代谢物SCFAs影响胰岛素抵抗程度,间接调控雄性生育力。

2)氨基酸。氨基酸是同时含有氨基和羧基的有机物质,在精子发生、卵子受精、胚胎植入中具有调节作用<sup>[32]</sup>。肠道菌群在小肠和大肠中都可以重新合成氨基酸,特别是赖氨酸。同时,赖氨酸也是精子形成的重要组成部分,直接参与睾丸中精子的产生,可以维持公猪的正常性功能<sup>[33]</sup>。哺乳动物肠道中微生物数量的增加有助于精氨酸的分解代谢并影响精子质量。微生物群代谢产生大量的膳食氨基酸,这些氨基酸通过门静脉系统进入全身,可以改善或预防代谢综合征,并参与调节精子质量、卵子受精和胚胎植入<sup>[34]</sup>。研究表明膳食中添加氨基酸有助于改善雄性生殖,例如,在热应激公猪日粮中添加L-精氨酸(0.8%~1.0%)显著改善其精液质量、抗氧化能力和性欲表现<sup>[35]</sup>。在精液稀释液中添加L-精氨酸能提高热应激诱导的公猪精子活力下降,表现为增加线粒体膜电位、ATP含量和线粒体呼吸链复合物,从而进一步维持公猪精子活力<sup>[36]</sup>。同时,L-精氨酸还可以通过上调LH分泌、增强抗氧化系统和增加睾酮合成相关基因的表达来缓解热应激小鼠睾酮的减少<sup>[37]</sup>。在热应激状态下雄兔日粮中添加脯氨酸(50~100 mg/kg)能够改善其精子活力、形态和顶体完整性<sup>[38]</sup>。此外,脯氨酸参与调控精子发生过程的信号通路。例如,在支持细胞中,与Src的SH3结构域相关的雄激素受体(氨基酸352~359)富含脯氨酸区域的激活是维持精子发生的关键途径<sup>[39]</sup>。总之,肠道微生物向宿主提供额外数量的氨基酸以减少氨基酸的膳食需求。然而,由于缺乏定量数据,细菌从头合成氨基酸对宿主的营养重要性仍然不确定,但雄性动物生殖性能不可避免地氨基酸的利用和代谢有关。在日粮中添加适量外源氨基酸,可能通过调节肠道微生物的组成以及氨基酸的利用,改善雄性生殖性能。足够的循环氨基酸对于精子的产生、分化和成熟至关重要,进而影响精子数量和精子质量<sup>[40]</sup>。综上所述,外源添加以及肠道微生物合成的氨基酸对精液品质的研究虽取得一定进展,但目前研究主要集中在特定氨基酸对精液质量的直接影响,但对

其在肠道中的合成途径、转运及与微生物群的相互作用机制尚了解不足。同时,环境因素对肠道中氨基酸代谢及精液品质的影响也需进一步研究。

3)维生素。肠道微生物能够为雄性动物提供维生素,从而调节雄性生殖。研究表明瘤胃球菌科中的特定菌属相对丰度降低可能会影响肠道中维生素A的吸收,而维生素A代谢紊乱会通过血液循环影响睾丸细胞,导致精子发生受损<sup>[41]</sup>。人类摄入食物纤维会使肠道内的双歧杆菌数量增加,从而合成B族维生素,改善精子质量并提高生育能力<sup>[42]</sup>。在双酚A(BPA)暴露下,雄性小鼠肠道中胆汁酸代谢失调和维生素D代谢水平降低,添加鼠李糖杆菌和植物乳杆菌能够恢复和稳定胆汁酸水平以及改善肠道中维生素D的代谢,从而改善睾丸功能障碍<sup>[19]</sup>。研究发现,在弱精子症男性中缺乏维生素D,精子活力与维生素D之间存在一定的相关性,其影响机制还需进一步研究<sup>[43]</sup>。而De Angelis等<sup>[44]</sup>证明维生素D通过非基因组驱动的调节与精子活力呈正相关,这些调节包括细胞内钙稳态调节和激活来参与精子获能和顶体反应的途径。饲喂富含维生素K的日粮可以提高大鼠睾丸炎症抵抗能力,也可以上调胆固醇和类固醇合成酶基因(如Cyp11a),从而增加血清睾酮浓度。在脂多糖(LPS)诱导的大鼠睾丸炎症模型中,核因子 $\kappa$ B(NF- $\kappa$ B)和促炎因子等炎症介质降低了调节Cyp11a的类固醇生成因子1和环AMP反应元件结合蛋白的转录活性。因此,Cyp11a表达的降低抑制了睾丸激素的合成,而维生素K能够抑制NF- $\kappa$ B的激活,增加LPS处理后Cyp11a的表达,并降低炎症刺激对睾酮合成的抑制作用<sup>[45]</sup>。此外,维生素K和维生素D的相对比例也会显著影响钙代谢,影响精子的发育和活力<sup>[46]</sup>。尽管发现维生素与精子质量、生育能力及睾丸功能相关,但维生素在肠道中的产生、吸收及其与微生物群的相互作用机制仍待深入。此外,维生素的相对比例对精液品质的综合影响及其调节机制也需进一步探索,以全面了解肠道微生物产生的维生素对雄性生殖的作用。综上,维生素在肠道-睾丸轴的作用尤为重要,可通过重塑肠道生态进行代谢调节,为治疗雄性不育提供新思路。

## 2.2 肠道微生物调控雄激素代谢以改善雄性动物繁殖力

肠道微生物通过肠-脑轴调节性腺发育,促进雄激素合成,保护睾丸免疫耐受<sup>[47]</sup>。雄激素是连接内

分泌系统和生殖系统的最重要激素之一,作用于多个器官和组织<sup>[48]</sup>。其主要活性形式包括睾酮(T)和双氢睾酮(DHT),在男性正常性功能和精子发生中起着关键作用<sup>[49-50]</sup>。大量研究表明肠道微生物可以调节动物睾酮的分泌。例如,在成年小鼠中,粪便中的DHT水平比血清中的DHT高出20倍以上,与不育小鼠相比,正常小鼠肠道中游离DHT的水平更高<sup>[51]</sup>。研究发现,罗伊氏乳杆菌可以增加老年小鼠的睾酮水平,进一步分析睾丸组织形态,发现其显著增强了老年小鼠的精子发生和间质细胞数量,揭示肠道微生物可以调节睾酮产生和睾丸衰老<sup>[52]</sup>。在青春期男性肠道中的安德克氏菌属、瘤胃球菌属、多尔氏菌属、梭状芽孢杆菌属和副拟杆菌属的丰度与睾酮水平显著相关<sup>[53]</sup>,与Shin等<sup>[54]</sup>在人类上的研究结果一致。此外,肠道微生物中的丁酸梭菌、尸体梭状芽孢杆菌、嗜淋巴丙酸杆菌、梭状芽孢杆菌和无害梭状芽孢杆菌能够表达类固醇代谢酶,即类固醇-17、20-碳链裂解酶、20 $\beta$ -羟基类固醇脱氢酶(20 $\beta$ -HSDH)、20 $\alpha$ -羟基类固醇脱氢酶(20 $\alpha$ -HSDH)、3 $\alpha$ -羟基类固醇脱氢酶(3 $\alpha$ -HSDH)或5 $\beta$ -还原酶<sup>[55-56]</sup>。因此,肠道微生物群参与雄激素的产生和代谢,其在雄激素代谢中的具体作用需要进一步的详细研究。

### 2.3 肠道微生物群通过释放信号分子调节睾丸功能

雄性生殖系统的生长、发育和功能调节也受到肠道微生物释放的各种信号分子的影响,具体见表1。例如,5-HT(5-羟色胺)、GABA( $\gamma$ -氨基丁酸)和多巴胺可以调节雄激素水平和精子获能过程。一氧化氮(NO)、一氧化碳(CO)以及硫化氢(H<sub>2</sub>S)和二氧化硫(SO<sub>2</sub>)分别是由精氨酸、甘氨酸和半胱氨酸合成的重要信号分子,其中NO通过11种不依赖于环磷酸鸟苷(cGMP)的机制降低细胞内游离的Ca<sup>2+</sup>,从而防止细胞内Ca<sup>2+</sup>浓度过高,起到保护细胞的作用<sup>[57]</sup>。

1)GABA和5-HT。肠道菌群产生的NO、H<sub>2</sub>S、5-HT和GABA可以参与雄性生殖的信号传导和调节<sup>[58]</sup>(图1)。据报道,一些细菌(如棒状杆菌、链球菌和大肠杆菌)可以合成5-HT<sup>[59]</sup>。睾丸中5-HT的存在平衡了雄激素的产生。在大鼠睾丸间质细胞中,5-HT与5-HT<sub>2</sub>受体结合刺激促肾上腺皮质激素释放因子(CRF)的分泌,其抑制环磷酸腺苷(cAMP)和雄激素的合成<sup>[60]</sup>。肠道是5-HT的主要来源,通过血小板运输到全身。研究表明,来自健康小鼠和人

类微生物群中能够形成孢子的微生物(Sp)通过其代谢物促进局部和外周5-HT浓度,以促进色氨酸羟化酶1(Tph1)的表达,这是肠嗜铬细胞(EC)中5-HT合成的重要基因<sup>[59]</sup>。此外,5-HT存在于精子中,并参与精子的生理过程。在马精子中发现了5-HT转运蛋白(SERT)的类似模式<sup>[61]</sup>。5-HT可以激活跨膜腺苷酸环化酶(tmAC)并打开CatSper通道,导致Ca<sup>2+</sup>的流入和蛋白激酶A(PKA)的激活,参与调节酪氨酸磷酸化和精子蛋白Ser/Thr磷酸化<sup>[62-63]</sup>。与CatSper和Ca<sup>2+</sup>存储有关,精子过度激活对精子活力和受精过程非常重要<sup>[23]</sup>。这种Ca<sup>2+</sup>的流入可以改善精子质量。此外,肠道中乳酸菌和双歧杆菌可产生GABA。GABA浓度与精子获能过程相关,并且能促进精子蛋白酪氨酸磷酸化,这是精子获能的一个重要指标。同时GABA还促进了顶体反应,该反应被选择性GABA<sub>A</sub>受体拮抗剂所抑制<sup>[64]</sup>。研究表明,GABA通过抑制5-HT与5-HT<sub>2</sub>受体的结合来减少精子的过度激活,从而与5-HT共同调节精子活化<sup>[65]</sup>。GABA还可以调节雌性哺乳动物的性行为,用驱虫药莫昔克丁治疗大鼠,可通过减少GABA分泌来降低其性欲和性行为,从而阻碍阴茎勃起<sup>[66]</sup>。综上所述,肠道微生物代谢可产生5-HT和GABA,二者主要对精子活力、顶体反应、精子获能以及受精至关重要。

2)NO和H<sub>2</sub>S。精氨酸能够为雄性生殖系统提供营养。小肠中一些细菌(乳酸菌属、双歧杆菌属、金黄色葡萄球菌、芽孢杆菌属)可通过精氨酸代谢影响NO的产生<sup>[33]</sup>,NO作为1种信号分子,其生理水平能够调节雄性生殖系统的功能。在睾丸中,NO通过调控睾丸内的血液微循环来影响睾丸的血液供应情况。大鼠睾丸微循环动脉舒张与收缩的活动与温度密切相关,温度升高时睾丸微动脉血管扩张,温度降低时血管收缩,这种睾丸微动脉对温度依赖性反应可能受NO调节<sup>[67]</sup>。在生殖系统中,NO和H<sub>2</sub>S这2种信号分子来源于阴茎的海绵体神经和内皮细胞,NO在海绵体的神经末梢释放,激活鸟苷酸环化酶(GC),被激活的GC产生cGMP,使阻塞海绵体的血管平滑肌松弛,从而诱导阴茎勃起<sup>[58]</sup>。肠道中有一些细菌如大肠杆菌、沙门氏菌、梭状芽孢杆菌和产气肠杆菌,可以代谢含硫氨基酸产生H<sub>2</sub>S。H<sub>2</sub>S在cGMP途径上与NO协同作用,抑制平滑肌细胞中5型磷酸二酯酶(PDE5)的活性并刺激勃起。研究表





酸及维生素等)、雄激素代谢和信号分子(5-羟色胺、 $\gamma$ -氨基丁酸、一氧化氮和硫化氢等)调节雄性生殖和精液品质。但调控雄性生殖功能的特定菌株(如乳酸杆菌、双歧杆菌等)的种类和使用方法及最佳剂量有待进一步明确。此外,微生物代谢产物影响精子发生的信号转导途径仍需深入解析,在“肠道-睾丸轴”中发挥作用的信号分子之间协同或拮抗作用的调控网络尚需阐明。

未来的研究应着重聚焦于多组学技术(宏基因组、16srDNA、代谢组等)解析调控雄性生殖功能的关键微生物标志物种类及调控网络,开发复合微生物生态制剂,如包含特定功能菌株(如丁酸梭菌)的复合益生菌配方(益生元、合生元和后生元等);建立肠道微生物标志物与精液品质的关联模型,为种畜选育提供新指标。

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## Progress on effects of gut microbiota on semen quality and reproduction performance of animals

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**Abstract** In animal husbandry production, the reproductive performance of animals directly affects economic benefits. Improving the semen quality and reproductive performance of breeding livestock is of great significance for accelerating breed improvement and enhancing breeding benefits. There is a complex dynamic balance between gut microbiota and male hosts. Gut microbiota can interact with the local intestinal tract of the host to affect the physiological functions of distal organs including testes, kidneys, and accessory sex glands, thereby regulating the semen quality of the host. This article reviewed the mechanism by which gut microbiota affects the semen quality and reproduction performance of male animals, using the ‘gut-testis axis’ as the theoretical framework. The semen quality is affected by regulating metabolic substrates including short-chain fatty acids, amino acids, and vitamins and androgen metabolism. The reproduction performance of males is regulated by releasing signal molecules including 5-hydroxytryptamine, gamma-aminobutyric acid, nitric oxide and hydrogen sulfide. The studies in the future should focus on analyzing how gut microbiota maintains intestinal homeostasis to regulate the semen quality of animal, and developing composite microbial preparations for regulating reproductive function of male animals to promote the development of efficient breeding in animal husbandry. It will provide a new perspective for understanding the complex relationship between gut microbiota and reproductive health of male animals, and offer a theoretical basis for improving the semen quality of male animals by regulating the colony ecology of gut microbiota.

**Keywords** gut microbiota; semen quality; metabolic substrates; signal molecules; reproduction performance

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