WORLD JOURNAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH
SJIF Impact Factor 8.453
Volume 14, Issue 17, 872-893. Case Study ISSN 2277–7105

CEFTRIAXONE OVERUSE AND THE MICROBIOME: IMPACT ON GUT HEALTH AND LONG-TERM PATIENT OUTCOMES

***[1]Ayushi Rai, [2]Mudasir Manzoor, [3]Dr. Amritpal Singh [4]Dr. Keshav Jindal and [5]Dr. Sageer Ahmad**

[1&2]Department of Pharmacy Practice (Doctor of Pharmacy) Adesh Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences, Adesh University, Bathinda.

[3]Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, Adesh Institute of Medical Science and Research, Adesh University, Bathinda.

[4]Professor (Pharmaceutics), Adesh Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences, Adesh University, Bathinda.

[5]Assisstant Professor (PharmD), Adesh Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences, Adesh University, Bathinda.

Article Received on
11 July 2025,

Revised on 30 July 2025,
Accepted on 20 August 2025

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr202517-38080

***Corresponding Author**
Ayushi Rai
Department of Pharmacy Practice (Doctor of Pharmacy) Adesh Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences, Adesh University, Bathinda.

ABSTRACT

Ceftriaxone is a third-generation, broad-spectrum, widely used cephalosporin drug, which is still considered the choice drug in the management of severe bacterial infections because of its remarkable pharmacokinetic properties and biliary excretion. Yet, there is a large body of developing evidence suggesting its nonintentional effects on the intestinal microbiome. Here, the review will address in detail how ceftriaxone interferes with the intestinal microbiome and results in loss of microbial diversity, proliferation of opportunistic pathogens, and inability to produce beneficial metabolites like short-chain fatty acids. The review talks of clinical implications such as the augmented vulnerability to Clostridioides difficile infection, bloodstream infections, metabolic disturbance, degraded vaccine reactions, and potential developmental sequelae after infancy exposure. It also addresses the duration of antimicrobial resistance genes and not the full restoration of the gut ecosystem, particularly in vulnerable groups such as neonates, the elderly, and patients in the immunocompromised stage. Lastly, recent and recent advances in preventing ceftriaxone-associated dysbiosis (including probiotics,

prebiotics, diet, faecal microbiota transplantation and sustained bacteriotherapy, and microbiome-guided drug use) are appraised. The awareness of these effects is important in the rational use of antibiotics and protecting the integrity of the human microbiome to secure improved patient outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Ceftriaxone; gut microbiota; dysbiosis; Clostridioides difficile infection; antimicrobial resistance; short-chain fatty acids; microbiome recovery; probiotics; early-life exposure; antibiotic stewardship.

INTRODUCTION

The gut microbiota, also referred to as microflora, is a very rich microbial environment in the human digestive tract composed of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa. These microbes play a crucial role in sustaining host well-being, contributing to the intestinal epithelial barrier integrity, vitamin synthesis (including K and B vitamins), bile acid transformation, immune response modulation, and nutrient metabolism. The metabolism of genetic-based programming (Belkaid *et.al*., 2014; Kho *et.al*., 2018; Flint *et.al*., 2012). In recent years, the gut microflora has been referred to as a second genome and has affected immunological tolerance, neurodevelopment, and metabolic equilibrium (Rooks *et.al*., 2016; Sharon *et.al*., 2016).

The basis of modern medicine is the use of antibiotics; however, their impact is, in fact, twofold, although on the one hand, they are a effective agent against infection, on the other hand, antibiotics lead to serious damage to the local microbial ecosystems. The antibiotic ceftriaxone, owing to its broad-spectrum effects, daily one-time dose, and extended half-life, is commonly employed in other illnesses and infections such as meningitis, UTI, community-acquired pneumonia, gonorrhea, and sepsis (Dethlefsen *et.al*., 2011; Sharon *et.al*., 2016; Neu *et.al*., 1982). Nevertheless, it is pharmacokinetics, especially biliary excretion, that leads to high concentrations of the drug arriving in the intestinal tract that have a profound impact on the composition of intestinal microbes (Becattini *et.al*., 2016).

Several studies revealed that an insufficient period of ceftriaxone exposure can still have a tremendously distorting effect on the microflora, causing the rise of opportunistic pathogens and the fall of microbiome diversity (Elvers *et.al*., 2016; Vollaard *et.al*., 1994). As an illustration, mice treated with ceftriaxone over an extended time developed damage to the intestinal mucosa, impaired immune responses, and broad-range gut dysbiosis (Guo *et.al*.,

2017; Gunzburg *et.al*., 2015). Human studies indicated that commensal bacteria such as Bacteroides, Bifidobacterium, and Lactobacillus are less prevalent, and that Clostridium difficile reports showed that the less prevalence of commensal bacteria like Bacteroides, Bifidobacterium, and Lactobacillus, and easy colonization of Clostridium difficile and multidrug-resistant Enterobacteriaceae occurs (Chang *et.al*., 2008; Russell *et.al*., 2012; Sommer *et.al*., 2011).

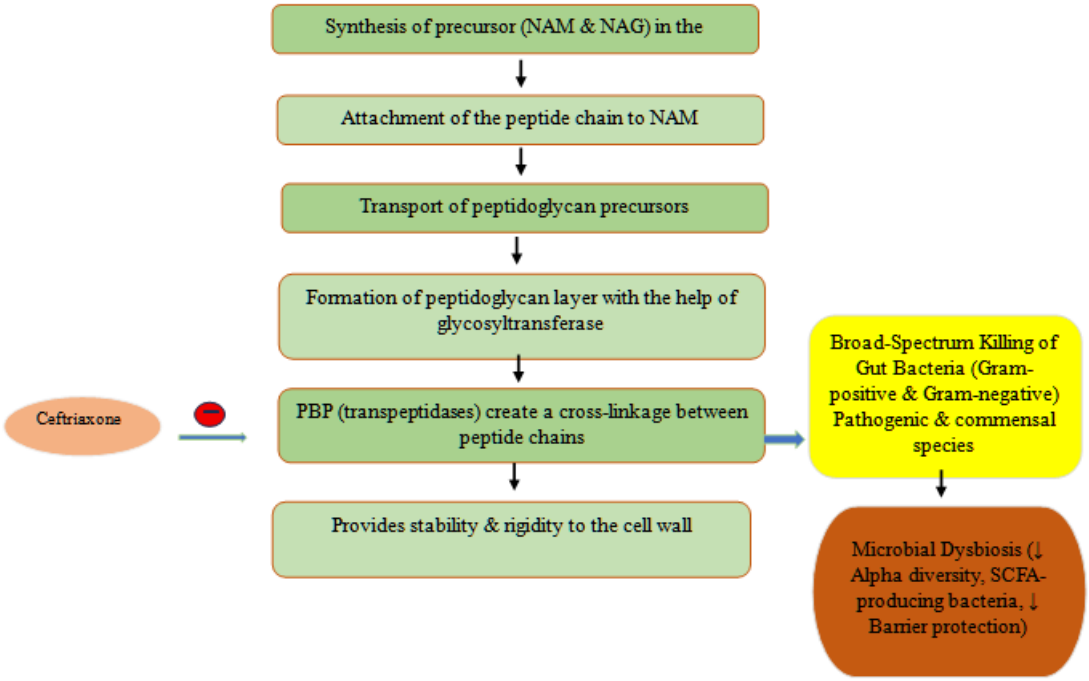
When administered during the early developmental stage, it can also interfere with both the immune development and mucosal tolerance, which is an important time in both gut microbe and immune systems co-development. Exposure of animals to ceftriaxone at early developmental stages leads to abnormal development of T-helper cells and limited intestinal and immune maturation with predisposition to immune-related infections as they enter adulthood (David *et.al*., 2023; Devlin *et.al*., 2023). Over and above its effect on the host, overuse of ceftriaxone contributes to antibiotic resistance, particularly in the Gram-negative enteric bacteria, further raising the concerns of the population as a whole. The overuse results in overgrowth by organisms that produce ESBLs.(Guh *et.al*., 2022; Kim *et.al*., 2023; Koh *et.al*., 2023)

Microbiota disruption mechanism

Ceftriaxone acts on the microbiome of the gut and is selective to both the bad as well as the good bacteria, by inhibiting the bacteria from making the bacterial cell wall. As a result, the imbalance in the microbiota decreases in diversity and richness as the commensal colonies of bacteria are massively depleted (Kootte *et.al*., 2024). It does not allow growth of obligate anaerobes like Bacteroidetes and Firmicutes, which regulate immunity, energy metabolism, and limit the diversity of the gut microbiome (Leung *et.al*., 2024; Mouton *et.al*., 2022). It impoverishes taxa such as Firmicutes, Bacteroidetes, and Faecalibacterium prausnitzii, promoting the bloom of opportunistic pathogens such as Klebsiella and Enterococcus. These alterations are linked with reduced mucosal immunity and heightened inflammation. It inhibits the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), especially butyrate, impairs the immune tolerance and repair of the epithelial (Koh *et.al*., 2023; Venegas *et.al*., 2022 It alters the intestinal balance as well and renders one vulnerable to Clostridium difficile by calibrating the metabolism of tryptophan and conversion of bile acids(Zelante *et.al*., 2023; Devlin & Fischbach *et.al*., 2023). Microbiota recovery might not be the same across the different populations; a partial dysbiosis restoration in few weeks could be observed in

healthy adults, but several months in elderly patients or immunocompromised patients. Exposure at an early stage of neonates may lead to chronic changes in immune and metabolic functioning. (David *et.al*., 2023; Palleja *et.al*., 2022; Tamburini et. al., 2023)

Bacterial cell wall synthesis, the mechanism of action of ceftriaxone, and microbiota disruption



Clinical Implications of Ceftriaxone-Induced Dysbiosis

Clinical Implications of dysbiosis induced by ceftriaxone

Despite the clinical efficacy of ceftriaxone as an agent that helps treat various infections, the overuse of the agent is progressively linked with some negative microbiome-related outcomes. Now, it has become known that the wide-range antimicrobial activity and biliary elimination of the gut microbiota greatly imbalances the gut microbiota and results in many acute or chronic clinical outcomes.

Clostridioides difficile Infection (CDI)

Ceftriaxone is highly associated with CDI, which is a deadly nosocomial infection. Ceftriaxone differs from the other β-lactams in that it is chiefly excreted through the biliary system, bringing the intestinal tract into direct contact with ceftriaxone that interferes with colonization resistance. This enables C. difficile to multiply even in patients who are not

simultaneously using other drugs that carry the risk of developing such an infection, such as fluoroquinolones or clindamycin (Guh *et.al*., 2022; McDonald *et.al*., 2023).

GUT pathogens and blood infections: Translocation

The altered microbiota in the gut caused by ceftriaxone highly enhances the intestinal permeability and facilitates the dissemination of opportunistic pathogens like Klebsiella pneumoniae and Enterococcus faecalis. Critically ill patients and immunocompromised patients are particularly vulnerable to negative effects of translocation; their complications may include bacteremia, sepsis, etc. A remarkable correlation between the post-ceftriaxone Enterobacteriaceae cruelty and an upsurge in endotoxin level and systemic inflammatory concentration has been determined.(Kim *et.al*., 2023; Zaborin *et.al*., 2022).

Metabolic and Immune Malregulation

The connection between dysbiosis caused by antibiotics and such persistent metabolic diseases is getting increasingly definite. The antimicrobial agent ceftriaxone decreases butyrate and other short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) required in the metabolism of glucose and energy balance as a whole. As research shows, there is an increased risk of the development of insulin resistance, weight gain, and lipid metabolism disorders after antibiotic-mediated changes in the microbial populations (Kootte *et.al*., 2024; Yoon *et.al*., 2003). Autoimmunity and low-grade inflammation are also promoted through the decrease of regulatory T-cell development-activity, a number caused by the reduction of regulatory microorganisms such as the Faecalibacterium prausnitzii. In this way, (Geirnaert *et.al*.2023).

Neuro Behavioral and Neuro Cognitive Sequelae

Dysbiosis, which is caused by ceftriaxone, may alter the gut-brain axis, which then may alter the synthesis of neurotransmitters, the neuroinflammation process, as well as the integrity of the blood-brain barrier. As per (Cheng *et.al*. 2024), experimental models have shown that microbiota modification by ceftriaxone aggravates the outcome of neurodegenerative disease, anxiety-like behavior and memory impairment. The effects are of great concern, especially to the children and the elderly.

Low Vaccine Response

Recent studies involving gnotobiotic mouse models identify that post-antibiotic gut dysbiosis lowered the systemic, as well as mucosal immune response to vaccinations, probably through shifted dendritic cell definition and disrupted antigen presentation (Lynn *et.al*., 2024). This

reveals the necessity to review the risk of ceftriaxone exposure among patients who receive vaccination or post-operative prophylaxis.

Proliferation of Anti-Bacterial Resistance Genes (ARGs)

Elements of resistance (bla_CTX-M and vanA) grow after administration of ceftriaxone, and the horizontal gene transfer mainly occurs in dysbiotic intestinal conditions (van Schaik *et.al*., 2023). Indirectly leading to the antimicrobial resistance crisis is the way ceftriaxone endangers the host and fosters nosocomial infection.

Prolonged Health disorders as well as Early Infantile Exposure to Ceftriaxone

1. Risk of Chronic Disease and Early Microbiome Imprinting

The first 1,000 days of life mark a critical period of colonization and diversification of the gut microbiome called the window of opportunity, and is regarded as a period that programs the immune and metabolic systems throughout life (Backhed *et al*., 2023). This process is disrupted by exposure to antibiotics, particularly those of broad-spectrum and particularly ceftriaxone, which result in an abnormal microbiota course. Unlike narrow-spectrum agents, ceftriaxone biliary excretion leads to an immediate and protracted intestinal exposure when using a parenteral route of administration (Leclercq *et.al*., 2024). Studies have shown that exposure to antibiotics at an early age is linked to reduced diversity of the microbiome and slower levels of colonization of beneficial taxa, which are crucial to immune homeostasis and mucosal tolerance, including on Bifidobacteria and Faecalibacteria (Milani *et.al*., 2022). These changes can disrupt host metabolism and inflammatory pathways irreversibly and lead to an increased likelihood of developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including obesity, diabetes, and asthma. By age seven, the rate of the chronic inflammatory disease rose 2.1 times in children who were exposed to ceftriaxone early in life. According to (Zhou *et.al*., 2024), the logistic regression model uses a response variable that predicts the occurrence of a desired outcome based on an individual or institution.

2. Pediatric Implications: Allergy, Type 1 Diabetes, Obesity, and Autism

Atopic and allergic conditions

Ceftriaxone-induced dysbiosis disturbs the Treg to Th2 balance, paired with a low oral response and increased sensitivity to allergens. Lower abundance of the bacteria producing SCFA (such as Blautia and Anaerostipes) has been linked to food allergies, eczema, and allergic rhinitis, which occur in children. On average, patients with these disorders achieve 50 percent (Stokholm *et.al*., 2023).

Diabetes type 1

New data of future prospective cohort studies provide links between the exposure of newborns to ceftriaxone and fluctuations of the gut barrier, as well as molecular mimicry processes, leading to an autoimmune response against β-cells. A recent Finnish cohort study showed that children exposed to ceftriaxone at the age of less than five months were more likely to get islet autoantibodies during the first five years of age at 1.8-fold (Hy Fallstrom, 2023).

Obesity

Infant antibiotics such as ceftriaxone impair the ability of the gut microbiota to control the extraction of energy and the storage of fat. Firmicutes expansion and Bacteroidetes loss triggered by ceftriaxone is similar to the lean in germ-free mouse phenotype (Cho *et.al*., 2023). The longitudinal analyses of children receiving two or more courses of ceftriaxone before they are two years old show that they develop 29 percent higher BMI by the age of five (Zhang *et.al*., 2024)

Autism spectrum disorders

Disruption of the gut-brain axis and neurodevelopmental illness are becoming more and more associated with ceftriaxone-induced microbiota manipulation. Ceftriaxone lowers the production of GABA precursors and GABA-derived metabolism produced by microbes, and this precedes the inhibition of serotonergic and dopaminergic neurotransmission at sensitive periods of neurodevelopment (Hsiao *et.al*., 2022). In a 2023 meta-analysis, exposure to antibiotics in the first year of life was identified as an independent risk factor of ASD, and ceftriaxone was identified to have the highest odds ratio (probability of exposure to an antibiotic), compared to the other 8 antibiotics classified as 8-lactam (Park *et.al*., 2023).

Vaccine Efficacy Immune Programming

At an early age, the gut microbiota plays an important role in establishing both the innate and adaptive immune system. The microbial-associated molecular patterns which are required during maturation of lymphoid tissue and antigen presentation are interfered with by the dysbiosis brought out by the antibiotics particularly ceftriaxone (Belkaid *et.al*., 2023). Studies in murine models have found reduced IgA production, development of Peyer patch and reduced systemic immunity to polysaccharide and protein antigens in neonates treated with ceftriaxone (Lynn *et.al*., 2024). The effectiveness of regular childhood vaccines, including the influenza, BCG and rotavirus, has been linked to early exposure to ceftriaxone. It is believed

that this is caused by a reduced engagement of Tfh-B cells and defactory germinal center reactions, which are associated with a modification of microbial stimulation (Lin *et.al*., 2023). These data indicate that the integrity of the microbiode is key in the formation of the long-term immunity following vaccination.

Evidence from Human Studies: Ceftriaxone-Induced Gut Microbiome Disruption and Health Consequences

1. Human microbiota alterations in composition and diversities

Within a broad-spectrum antibiotic, even at an intravenous dosage, ceftriaxone influences the microbiome of the small intestine because of its biliary elimination (Leclercq *et.al*., 2023). The same was used to investigate the effects of ceftriaxone on hospitalized patients in a clinical study where adult volunteers were given ceftriaxone (2 g/day five days), resulting in a dramatic decrease in alpha diversity and sustained low levels of Firmicutes and Bacteroidetes 30 days after treatment. Further, 16S rRNA gene sequencing demonstrated how ceftriaxone treatment favored Proteobacteria, notably Klebsiella and Enterococcus, which are responsible for nosocomial infections and the risk of translocation. Notably, mucosal integrity keystone taxa including Faecalibacterium prausnitzii and Akkermansia muciniphila, were lost in large quantities.

2. Pathological outcomes of Dysbiosis

In the functional metagenomic studies, decreased short-chain fatty acid (SCFA) biosynthesis, in particular butyrate and propionate, has been observed 48 hours after the treatment with ceftriaxone (Li *et.al*., 2024). These SCFAs play a vital role in immune modulatory processes, epithelial repair and tight junction control. Subsequently, post-therapeutic serum samples demonstrated that the markers of the gut permeability, such as zonulin and proinflammatory cytokines, such as TNF-alpha and IL-6, were elevated (Nguyen *et.al*., 2023). Also, tryptophan and bile acid metabolism patterns were changed in metabolomic analyses. This disturbance includes the aryl hydrocarbon receptor (AhR) pathway and the output of second-tier bile acids, which influence the inflammation processes and the vulnerability to Clostridium difficile (Torres *et.al*., 2023).

3. The Risk of Increased Infections by Opportunistic Diseases

Independent evidence is also available in connection with ceftriaxone and a high risk of C. difficile infection (CDI). A meta-analysis of 12,045 hospitalized patients using ceftriaxone alone found that it was one of the most hazardous drugs when it comes to CDI (Kim *et.al*.,

2022). (Kim *et.al*., 2022). The depletion of bile acid-converting commensals and the loss of colonization resistance are probably the causes of this. As demonstrated in ICU cohorts where rectal swabs showed elevated bla_CTX-M and vanA gene prevalence within 10 days post-treatment, gut colonization with multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs) is also more likely to occur after ceftriaxone exposure (Ramirez *et.al*., 2023). This is likely to be due to loss of colonization resistance and loss of bile acid-converting commensals. Gut colonization by multidrug-resistant organisms (MDROs) is also more likely to be carried out after exposure to ceftriaxone, as shown in ICU cohorts, whereby a greater prevalence of bla_CTX-M and vanA genes was identified by rectal swab 10 days after treatment (Ramirez *et.al*., 2023).

4. Long-Term Metabolic and Immunologic Outcomes

According to a longitudinal birth cohort (n = 1,038) that followed exposure to antibiotics in the infant period, ceftriaxone before 12 months was associated with a significant increase in insulin resistance markers, the development of metabolic syndrome at the age of 6, and higher BMI z-scores (Zhou *et.al*., 2024). The microbial fingerprints of these children demonstrated a continuous decrease in Bifidobacteria and a rise in Enterobacteriaceae. The vaccine responses, including antibody concentration against rotavirus and BCG, were also worse in infants exposed to third-generation cephalosporins (Lynn *et.al*., 2024). That was explained by the poor maturation of regulatory T-cells and microbial-dependent antigen processing pathways.

5. Psychoneurological and developmental Effects

The increasing number of studies indicates that the neurodevelopmental outcomes are also linked to dysbiosis induced by ceftriaxone. In another observational investigation at multiple centers, the exposure to ceftriaxone during newborn life was linked with increased incidences of ASD diagnoses at age 5 years (Park *et.al*., 2023). One of the hypothesized mechanisms was the disruption of the gut-brain axis that involved a loss of GABAergic signaling and multiplication of intestinal inflammation.

Study focus	Findings	Population type	References
Microbial Diversity Loss	Reduced alpha and beta diversity; ↓ *Firmicutes*, ↓ *Bacteroidetes*, ↑ *Enterococcus* and *Klebsiella*	Adults (clinical study)	Zhang *et.al*.,(2023)
Pathogen Overgrowth	↑ Proteobacteria post-	Hospitalized	Leung

	treatment; depletion of commensals like *F. prausnitzii*, *A. muciniphila*	patients (16S rRNA)	*et.al*.,(2024)
SCFA Decline and Leaky Gut	↓ Butyrate & propionate; ↑ zonulin, ↑ inflammatory markers (IL-6, TNF-α)	Adults (metabolomics)	Li *et.al*., (2024); Nguyen *et.al*. (2023)
Altered Bile Acid & Tryptophan Metabolism	Dysregulation of AhR and FXR signaling; increased C. difficile risk	Clinical metabolic profiling	Torres *et.al*. (2023)
C. difficile Infection Risk	Ceftriaxone ranked as high-risk for CDI, even when used alone	Meta-analysis (12,045 patients)	Kim *et.al*., (2022)
Colonization with MDROs	↑ Resistance gene cassettes (*bla_CTX-M*, *vanA*) after ceftriaxone exposure	ICU patients (rectal swabs)	Ramirez *et.al*. (2023)
Infant Metabolic Impact	Early ceftriaxone linked with ↑ BMI, ↑ insulin resistance, ↑ metabolic syndrome at age 6	Birth cohort (n=1,038)	Zhou *et.al*. (2024)
Vaccine Response Impairment	Lower rotavirus/BCG antibody titers post-ceftriaxone exposure; linked to impaired microbial immune education	Infants (longitudinal study)	Lynn *et.al*. (2024)
Neurodevelopmental Effects (ASD)	Neonatal ceftriaxone exposure associated with ↑ autism diagnoses by age 5; possible gut-brain axis disruption	Observational cohort (n=623 children)	Park *et.al*. (2023)

Reversibility and Recovery of the Microbiome After Ceftriaxone Exposure

i. Time-course of Microbiota Restoration

Alpha diversity usually drops drastically within a few days following ceftriaxone-induced dysbiosis. Microbial richness may take months until it has reached full taxonomy and functionality, whereas in healthy people, the restoration process should start two to three weeks after treatment (Zhang *et.al*., 2023; Leung *et.al*., 2024). Taxa that produce SCFA, like Faecalibacterium prausnitzii, Lachnospiraceae, and Ruminococcaceae, are particularly susceptible to this effect, since the recovery does not occur or is delayed up to 90 days (Kim *et.al*., 2022).

ii. Host And Age Dependent Recoveries

The extremely long recovery times occur in children, the elderly and individuals with metabolic or autoimmune disorders. Long-term changes in microbiota of neonates when exposed to ceftriaxone early in life are linked with unfavorable development of allergic and metabolic diseases later in life (Zhou *et.al*., 2024). The overabundance of the proteobacteria in elderly patients is due to the failure to recolonize by the prolonged inflammation and low plasticity of the microbiome (Li *et.al*., 2023).

iii. Functional Irrecovery After Taxonomic Reassembly

Taxonomic measurements are not sufficient to evaluate microbiota recovery, due to the recent findings associated with metagenomic and metabolomic studies. Whereas certain taxa appear to be recovering, functional recovery assessed by the SCFA production, the metabolism of tryptophan, and bile acid modification is significantly hampered in many cases, as (Li *et.al*., 2024) claim. This results in impaired epithelial repair, immunological regulation, and plasticity of gene expression, leading to metabolic homeostasis because of transcriptional silencing of metabolic pathways or reduced plasticity of gene expression.

Intervention's Role in Recovery

The recovery of the microbiome can be facilitated with the help of certain measures: prebiotics (such as resistant starch and inulin) promote the development of good bacteria and the production of SCFA.

The method of fecal microbiota transplantation or FMT has been promising in restoring not only the taxonomic but also functional ability of patients with C. difficile to recover especially after exposure to ceftriaxone (Wang et.al., 2024). High-fiber and polyphenol-rich diets can enhance the microbial resilience-functional recovery (Gomez et.al., 2022).

i. Immune Reprogramming and Delayed Sequelae

Alterations of systemic and mucosal immunity are correlated with prolonged dysbiosis after the usage of ceftriaxone. As shown by Kamada et.al. (2023), Th17 skewing and Treg populations remained suppressed even after a partial restoration of microbial populations. These changes are associated with the decreased oral vaccine response and the elevated inflammatory markers (Lynn et.al., 2024). Therefore, microbiomes almost certainly fail to go back to their immunological state prior to the procedure even after being restored.

ii. Antibiotic Resistance Persistence Post-Recovery

Most importantly, despite recovery of the microbiota, the resistome, in this case the β-lactamase genes (bla_CTX-M, bla_SHV, etc.) might also be left behind. Ramirez et.al. (2023) asserts that the ability of ceftriaxone to select plasmid-encoded resistance genes that continue to persist in commensals increases the prospect of opportunistic infection and horizontal genes over time.

Therapeutic Strategies to Mitigate Ceftriaxone-Induced Dysbiosis

Supplementing with Probiotics: Interventions Particular to Certain Strains

One of the most studied methods for understanding microbiome modification is probiotics. Nevertheless, most of the available commercially effective formulations are strongly strain-specific and unable to colonize successfully or recover the microbiota homeostatic activities after antibiotic treatment. The Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG and Saccharomyces boulardii have been promising in the decreasing of antibiotics-induced diarrhea and Clostridium difficile infection of patients taking ceftriaxone (Guarino et.al., 2023). According to recent studies, the probiotics of the next-generation, i.e., Akkermansia muciniphila and Faecalibacterium prausnitzii, could potentially possess the capacity to reestablish the mucosal integrity and antiflammatory properties (Martinez et.al., 2024). Sigh: Interindividual differences in colonization success are, however, high, which prevents wide application and outlines the importance of specific probiotics approaches.

Prebiotics and Synbiotics: Substrate-based Recovery

Among the probiotics that are involved in the development of favorable commensals and the production of SCFA, one can distinguish inulin, fructooligosaccharides (FOS), and galactooligosaccharides (GOS). The efficiency of colonization rises when these substrates are used together with specific probiotics (synbiotics). A synbiotic-based product consisting of GOS and Bifidobacterium longum greatly increased the rate of microbiota restoration and normalized the butyrate levels in the individuals with previous ceftriaxone administration (Chen et.al., 2023). Moreover, cranberry extracts and green tea catechins are plant-derived polyphenols with characteristics of prebiotics and promote more favorable changes in microbiome (Chung et.al., 2022).

Dietary Interventions: Fiber and Fermented Foods

Food plays an important part in deciding robustness, as well as the structure of microbes. The recovery of the microbiota can also be accelerated by the high intake of fermented foods, resistant starches, and soluble fibers in their diets.

- The resistant starch-enriched Mediterranean and plant-based diets favor the butyrogenic SCFAs after ceftriaxone, regulating SCFAs balance (So et.al., 2024).
- Vegetables and dairy products that have undergone fermentation provide viable microorganisms and bioactive metabolites that contribute to immunological signaling and resistance to colonization (Zhao et.al., 2022).

Postbiotics and Microbial Metabolite Supplementation

New treatment centers on metabolites produced by microbes instead of living creatures. Examples of postbiotics that alter host immunity and barrier include butyrate, indole-3-propionate, and secondary bile acids. In a second stage, butyrate enemas or oral butyrate microencapsulation formulation decrease the inflammatory markers and repair tight junctions in the epithelium following ceftriaxone (Tungland et.al., 2023). The authors assert that indole-based compounds restore AhR signaling and enhance the generation of IL-22 and mucosal immunity (Krautkramer et.al., 2024).

A Hail-Mary Genius: Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT)

FMT is specifically effective in the process of microbial diversity and functionality restoration in the conditions of recurrent C. difficile infections with ceftriaxone use. It is also being applied to post-antibiotic dysbiosis without CDI explicitly. As observed by (Wang et.al., 2024) FMT has been able to reestablish immune balance, synthesis of SCFA, and mucosal barrier within seven days in the mouse models. Nonetheless, careless treatment of FMT may lead to the transmission of unwanted characters and demand a high selection rate of donors (Khanna et.al., 2023).

Precision Microbiome Restoration, or Targeted Bacteriotherapy

One of the latest trends has been the creation of certain bacterial flora to replace certain microbial functions destroyed by ceftriaxone. Certain microbial cocktails, including Clostridium cluster IV and XIVa, can be found in kid blends and suppress Th17 skewing, thereby supplementing the control of Treg-inducing competence (Atarashi et al., 2023).

Biosynthetically-enabled engineered commensals (such as the production of SCFA or vitamin B) offer potential for future therapeutic use (Charbonneau *et.al*., 2024).

Adjunctive Use of Antibiotic-Inactivating Agents

It has also been proposed that oral 2-lactamase enzymes supplement intravenous ceftriaxone to deactivate antibiotic residues that get their way into the bowel.

- At the intestinal level, the excreted ceftriaxone is hydrolyzed by the β-lactamase Ribaxamase, preserving the microbiota without modulating the systemic concentration of the drug (Kaleko et.al., 2022).

Microbiome-Informed Prescribing and Future Directions

1. Stratified Risk Assessment and Microbiome Vulnerability

The human microbiome susceptibility evaluation needs to be the starting point of personalization in prescribing. Comorbidities such as metabolic syndrome or an inflammatory bowel disease, a history of exposure to antibiotics, age, and current microbiota diversity can all indicate the likelihood that adverse changes to a microbiome will occur (Dethlefsen et.al., 2023). Some of the instruments that are in development are as follows:

- Keystone presence and baseline diversity-based microbiome risk scores.

The potential of the resilience is measured by metabolomic and transcriptomic profiling practices before beginning the treatment.

Such stratification enables clinicians to use less disruptive agents, shorten treatment duration, or even possible co-interventions like probiotics or synbiotics.

2. The Metrics of the Microbiome Boost Antibiotic Stewardship

The main goal of the existing antibiotic stewardship is to reduce the rates of improper prescriptions. Microbiome-informed stewardship builds on this to also factor in products that are protective of the microbiota:

- Replace broad-spectrum antibiotics, such as ceftriaxone, with narrow-spectrum ones in situations when possible (Wells et.al., 2022).
- Another such measure could be de-escalation protocols and the cessation of empirical therapy according to the results of rapid diagnostics (e.g., PCR or metagenomic sequencing) (Wilson et.al., 2023).

Limiting exposure in the bowel by selecting low excretion antibiotics in the feces (e.g., cefotaxime rather than ceftriaxone when clinically similar).

3. Microbiome Electronic Health Records (EHRs)

The new idea that has been catching on is incorporating risk indicators and the status of the microbiome into EHRs to facilitate decision-making on prescriptions. This comprises:

- Documenting the history of C. difficile or antibiotic-related dysbiosis.
- AI prophecy models that point to the danger of dysbiosis caused by certain antibiotics using historical microbiome data (Brito et.al., 2024). Such systems can automatically provide warnings and propose counteractions to prevent high-risk behaviours.

4. Rational Antibiotic Design: The Next Frontier

New antibiotics are being produced, and Bacteria have accounted for the safety of the microbiome in their making. Such innovations are:

- Special delivery mechanisms (removing the drug to an infection site and coating it where the pH-sensitive delivery system releases the drug) (Ghosh et.al., 2023).
- Anti-virulent drugs without lethality which prevent bacterial pathogenicity and preserve microbial ecosystems intact (Dickinson et.al., 2024). Also, CRISPR-based antibiotics, as well as bacteriophage therapy, have a pathogen-specific degradation capacity and commensal fostering effect (Yilmaz et.al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Even though ceftriaxone is for clinical necessity in the course of severe infections, its broad use is a severe threat to the integrity of the gut microbiota and, consequently, the health of patients in the short and long term. The broad-spectrum and biliary excretion of ceftriaxone has been documented to cause significant changes to the gut microbial diversity and functionality, lowering protective commensals, stimulating growth of potentially harmful pathogens, and dysregulating significant immunological and metabolic functions. This dysbiosis occurs early in life and is associated with increased risk of blood infection, Clostridium difficile infection, metabolic disorder, antibiotic resistance, low vaccine response, and neurodevelopmental disorder.

The post-ceftriaxone reintroduction of the gut ecosystem is uneven and often inadequate, especially in populations at risk, such as young children, the elderly, and patients with immunocompromised bodies. This underlines a critical challenge of how targeted

stewardship, microbiome-based prescribing, probiotics, prebiotics, diet interactions, and the latest innovative approaches, such as FMT or precision bacteriotherapy, can be utilized to harmlessly maximize benefits.

The health benefits of using ceftriaxone have to be weighed against the unexpected ecological impacts of using the drug to safeguard the health of patients and ensure citizen health. But rational antibiotic use can give us a way forward by keeping antibiotics effective and preserving our second genome by relying on personalized risk assessment and newly designed microbiome-protective measures.

Abbreviation

Abbreviation	Full Form
ARGs	Antibiotic Resistance Genes
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorders
AhR	Aryl hydrocarbon Receptor
BCG	Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (tuberculosis vaccine)
BMI	Body Mass Index
CDI	Clostridioides difficile Infection
EHR	Electronic Health Record
ESBL	Extended-Spectrum Beta-Lactamase
FMT	Fecal Microbiota Transplantation
FOS	Fructooligosaccharides
FXR	Farnesoid X Receptor
GABA	Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid
GOS	Galactooligosaccharides
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
IL	Interleukin
MDRO	Multidrug-Resistant Organisms
MAMPs	Microbial-Associated Molecular Patterns
NCDs	Non-Communicable Diseases
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction
SCFA	Short-Chain Fatty Acids
Tfh	T Follicular Helper (cells)
Treg	Regulatory T cell
Th17	T-helper 17 cells
TNF-α	Tumor Necrosis Factor alpha

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Keshav Jindal, my co-supervisor Dr. Sageer Ahmad for their invaluable guidance, support, and encouragement

throughout the course of this research. I am thankful to the faculty and staff of AIPBS, for providing the necessary facilities and a stimulating academic environment.

Finally, I acknowledge all the researchers and authors whose work has contributed significantly to the foundation and progress of this study.

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