
Abstract
The application of probiotics and prebiotics to the manipulation of the microbial ecology of the human colon has recently seen many scientific advances. The sequencing of probiotic genomes is providing a wealth of new information on the biology of these microorganisms. In addition, we are learning more about the interactions of probiotics with human cells and with pathogenic bacteria. An alternative means of modulating the colonic microbial community is by the use of prebiotic oligosaccharides. Increasing knowledge of the metabolism of prebiotics by probiotics is allowing us to consider specifically targeting such dietary intervention tools at specific population groups and specific disease states.