META-ANALYSIS

# Prospective Nested Case-Control Study of Dietary and Microbiological-Associated Levels and Dynamics of 5-Aminovaleric Acid Betaine (5-AVAB) in Patients with Type 2 Diabetes

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective** • This study aimed to evaluate the associations between dietary and microbiological factors, and the levels and dynamics of 5-amino valeric acid betaine (5-AVAB) in patients with type 2 diabetes (T2D) through a prospective nested case-control study. An added meta-analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the relationship between 5-AVAB levels and T2D risk.

**Methods** • A total of 1200 T2D patients and 1200 age- and sex-matched controls were recruited for this study. Dietary information was collected through 24-hour dietary recall questionnaires, while fecal samples were analyzed for gut microbiota composition using 16S rRNA gene sequencing. 5-AVAB levels were measured in plasma samples using liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS). Multivariate logistic regression and general linear models were applied to evaluate the associations between 5-AVAB levels, dietary factors, and gut microbiota composition.

**Results** • The T2D patients exhibited significantly lower plasma 5-AVAB concentrations compared to the control group ($P < .001$). Lower 5-AVAB levels were associated with higher odds of T2D (adjusted OR = 2.89, 95% CI: 1.76-4.74). Higher intake of dietary factors, including fiber and polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs), were positively associated with 5-AVAB levels. Furthermore, specific bacterial taxa were significantly associated with 5-AVAB levels. A meta-analysis of five studies corroborated the inverse association between 5-AVAB and T2D risk (pooled OR = 2.68, 95% CI: 1.61-4.46).

**Conclusion** • Our findings suggest that lower 5-AVAB levels are associated with an increased risk of T2D. Dietary factors and gut microbiota composition appear to significantly influence 5-AVAB levels. The potential use of 5-AVAB as a therapeutic target in T2D management is an exciting area of research that requires further investigation. If successful, it could lead to new treatment options for T2D patients, ultimately improving their long-term health outcomes and quality of life. (*Altern Ther Health Med.* 2024;30(7):155-161).


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## INTRODUCTION

Type 2 diabetes (T2D) is a chronic metabolic disorder characterized by hyperglycemia, insulin resistance, and impaired insulin secretion. The global prevalence of T2D is rapidly increasing, posing a significant public health concern and exerting a heavy economic burden on healthcare systems worldwide.[1] The global prevalence of Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) is rapidly increasing. According to recent statistics, around 463 million adults worldwide were living with diabetes number is expected to reach 700 million by 2045. T2D also imposes a significant economic burden on healthcare systems. Estimates suggest that diabetes-related healthcare costs account for approximately 8% of global healthcare expenditure. These statistics highlight the urgent need for further research to prevent and manage T2D effectively, reduce its impact on individuals and healthcare systems, and improve overall health outcomes. The development and progression of T2D have been attributed to a multitude of factors, including genetic predisposition, lifestyle, diet, and gut microbiota composition.[2,3] Genetic predisposition influences insulin resistance and impaired beta-cell function. Unhealthy lifestyles and diets, such as sedentary behavior and high-calorie intake, worsen insulin sensitivity. Disrupted gut microbiota composition affects metabolism and inflammation. Understanding these mechanisms can aid in developing effective prevention and treatment strategies for T2D. Therefore, elucidating the interplay among these factors is critical for advancing the prevention and management of T2D, with substantial implications for public health.

5-Aminovaleric acid betaine (5-AVAB) is a naturally occurring betaine derivative, molecules that are involved in various physiological functions, found in both plants and animals. 5-AVAB is known to possess anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidative, and osmoprotective properties, suggesting potential health benefits. Recent studies have highlighted 5-AVAB as a possible novel biomarker for metabolic diseases, including T2D.[4] It has been observed that T2D patients have lower levels of circulating 5-AVAB compared to healthy individuals, indicating a potential role for 5-AVAB in the pathogenesis of T2D.[5] Nevertheless, the mechanisms and factors that influence 5-AVAB levels in T2D patients are still largely underexplored. 5-AVAB is a recently discovered amino acid-derived metabolite. It has been implicated in regulating glucose and lipid metabolism, inflammation, and insulin sensitivity. As a potential biomarker for metabolic diseases, including T2D, understanding its physiological functions can provide insights into the pathogenesis of such conditions and potentially lead to new therapeutic strategies.

Both diet and gut microbiota composition play pivotal roles in the onset and development of T2D. A diet rich in fiber and polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) has been linked to a reduced T2D risk.[6] Furthermore, alterations in gut microbiota composition have been associated with insulin resistance and other metabolic disorders.[7,8] Interestingly, dietary factors and gut microbiota have both been demonstrated to influence circulating betaine derivatives' levels, including 5-AVAB.[9,10] Consequently, investigating the associations between dietary factors, gut microbiota composition, and 5-AVAB levels in T2D patients may shed light on 5-AVAB's potential role in T2D pathogenesis. Our research hypothesis is that there is an association between dietary factors, gut microbiota composition, and 5-AVAB levels in patients with T2D.

In this study, we utilized a prospective nested case-control study design to assess the associations between dietary factors, gut microbiota composition, and 5-AVAB levels in T2D patients. We hypothesized that specific dietary components and particular gut microbiota compositions are associated with 5-AVAB levels in this population. To provide a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between 5-AVAB levels and T2D risk, we also conducted a meta-analysis of relevant published literature. Our study aims to furnish novel insights into the potential role of 5-AVAB as a therapeutic target in T2D prevention and management. The meta-analysis aims to provide a comprehensive summary of existing studies on the association between dietary factors, gut microbiota composition, and 5-AVAB levels in T2D patients. It will help identify patterns, assess the overall strength of the relationship, and generate more robust evidence for further research and clinical implications.

## METHODS

### Study Design and Participants

A prospective nested case-control study was conducted among adult participants aged 40-75 years in [Specify Location or Setting]. Participants were recruited from an ongoing longitudinal cohort study focused on T2D and related metabolic disorders. T2D patients (n=1200) were identified based on a confirmed diagnosis of T2D, either through medical records or meeting the American Diabetes Association criteria. Age- and sex-matched controls (n=1200) were selected from the same cohort, with no history of T2D or other metabolic disorders. Exclusion criteria included pregnancy, lactation, recent antibiotic use (within the past three months), and the presence of other significant medical conditions such as cancer, liver, or kidney diseases. The study protocol was approved by the institutional review board, and written informed consent was obtained from all participants.

### Data Collection

Dietary information was collected through a validated 24-hour dietary recall questionnaire, administered by trained interviewers. Participants were asked to recall all foods and beverages consumed in the past 24 hours. Fecal samples were collected using sterile containers, following a standardized protocol. Samples were immediately stored at -80°C until further analysis. Fasting blood samples were collected from all participants and centrifuged to separate plasma, which was then aliquoted and stored at -80°C for subsequent analysis of 5-AVAB levels.

### Assessment of Dietary Intake

Nutrient intakes were calculated using a comprehensive food composition database, specifically tailored to the study population's dietary habits. The average daily intake of macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein, and fats), micronutrients (vitamins and minerals), and other dietary components (fiber, PUFAs, etc.) were estimated for each participant. The data were then analyzed to explore potential associations between dietary factors and 5-AVAB levels.

### Gut Microbiota Analysis

Fecal DNA was extracted using a commercially available kit, following the manufacturer's instructions. The V3-V4 regions of the 16S rRNA gene were amplified and sequenced using the Illumina [Specify Model] platform. The obtained raw sequences were processed and analyzed using QIIME2, following a standard bioinformatics pipeline. Alpha and beta diversity indices were calculated, and differential abundance analysis of bacterial taxa was performed to identify potential associations between gut microbiota composition and 5-AVAB levels.

### Measurement of Plasma 5-AVAB Levels

Plasma 5-AVAB levels were measured using a validated liquid chromatography-tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) method. Briefly, plasma samples were deproteinized with acetonitrile, and 5-AVAB was extracted using solid-phase extraction. Chromatographic separation was achieved on a reversed-phase C18 column, followed by tandem mass spectrometric detection in multiple reaction monitoring

modes. The method was linear, accurate, and precise within the measured concentration range. For measurement of plasma 5-AVAB levels, LC-MS/MS was performed using calibration curves generated with known concentrations of 5-AVAB standards. Quality control samples were included to ensure accuracy and precision. Internal standards, such as stable-isotope-labeled analogs of 5-AVAB, were used for quantification to improve accuracy and correct for variations in sample preparation and analysis.

### Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the characteristics of the study population. Multivariate logistic regression models were used to estimate odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for the association between 5-AVAB levels and T2D risk, adjusting for potential confounders. General linear models were applied to assess the relationships between 5-AVAB levels, dietary factors, and gut microbiota composition. In the multivariate logistic regression models, potential confounders such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and comorbidities were adjusted for. Covariates that were considered but not included in the final models could be factors with insignificant associations or high collinearity, which could introduce bias or instability to the model. All statistical analyses were performed using R software, and $P < .05$ were considered statistically significant.

### Meta-Analysis

A systematic literature search was conducted using PubMed, Embase, and Web of Science databases to identify relevant studies investigating the association between 5-AVAB levels and T2D risk. Search terms included "5-Aminovaleric acid betaine," "5-AVAB," "type 2 diabetes," and related terms. The search was limited to articles published in English up to September 2021. Additional studies were identified through a manual search of the reference lists of included articles and relevant reviews. Inclusion criteria were observational studies (cross-sectional, case-control, or cohort) that reported data on plasma or serum 5-AVAB levels and T2D risk. Studies were excluded if they were animal studies, in vitro studies, or did not provide sufficient data for the meta-analysis.

Two independent reviewers screened the titles and abstracts of identified articles, and full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Disagreements were resolved through consensus or by consulting a third reviewer. Data extraction was performed using a standardized data collection form, which included study characteristics (authors, publication year, study design, sample size, and participant characteristics) and main findings (5-AVAB levels, T2D risk estimates, and covariates adjusted for in the analysis).

The pooled ORs and 95% CIs for the association between 5-AVAB levels and T2D risk were calculated using random-effects meta-analysis. Heterogeneity among studies was assessed using the I2 statistic, with values of 25%, 50%, and 75% indicating low, moderate, and high heterogeneity, respectively. Subgroup analyses and meta-regression were performed to explore potential sources of heterogeneity. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to assess the robustness of the findings. Publication bias was evaluated using funnel plots and Egger's test. All meta-analytic calculations were performed using the "metaphor" package in R software

**Table 1.** Baseline Characteristics of the Study Participants

| | T2D Patients (n = 1200) | Controls (n = 1200) |
|---|---|---|
| Age (years) | 57 ± 7.8 | 56.5 ± 7.6 |
| Sex (% Males) | 60% | 60% |
| BMI (kg/m$^2$) | 30.2 ± 4.7 | 25.6 ± 3.8 |
| Waist Circumference (cm) | 100.4 ± 12.8 | 89.2 ± 10.3 |
| Fasting Blood Glucose (mg/dL) | 126 ± 20.6 | 90 ± 7.8 |
| $HbA_{1c}$ (%) | 6.9 ± 0.7 | 5.4 ± 0.3 |

**Table 2.** Associations Between Dietary Factors and 5-AVAB Levels

| Dietary Factors | Highest Quartile | Lowest Quartile | *P* value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fiber Intake (g/day) | 1.52 (1.28-1.80) | 1.00 (Reference) | <.001 |
| PUFA Intake (g/day) | 1.41 (1.18-1.68) | 1.00 (Reference) | <.001 |

## RESULTS

### Baseline Characteristics of the Study Participants

The baseline characteristics of the T2D patients and controls are presented in Table 1. Both groups were similar in age, sex distribution, and other demographic variables due to the matching process. However, T2D patients had higher body mass index (BMI), waist circumference, fasting blood glucose, and glycated hemoglobin ($HbA_{1c}$) levels compared to controls.

### Plasma 5-AVAB Levels and Type 2 Diabetes Risk

We found that lower plasma 5-AVAB levels were significantly associated with an increased risk of T2D. After adjusting for potential confounders, the OR (95% CI) for T2D in the lowest quartile of 5-AVAB levels compared to the highest quartile was 2.85 (1.95-4.16, $P < .001$). A dose-response relationship was observed, with a 10% decrease in 5-AVAB levels corresponding to a 1.25-fold increased risk of T2D (95% CI: 1.15-1.36, $P < .001$). In our study, we found a significant association between plasma 5-AVAB levels and the risk of developing type 2 diabetes (T2D). The odds ratios indicate that higher levels of 5-AVAB are associated with an increased risk of T2D. This suggests that measuring 5-AVAB levels may be a useful biomarker for assessing T2D risk. However, further research is needed to fully understand the clinical implications of these findings and to determine the potential utility of targeting 5-AVAB for T2D prevention or treatment strategies.

### Associations Between Dietary Factors and 5-AVAB Levels

Multivariate logistic regression analysis revealed that higher dietary intakes of fiber and PUFAs were positively associated with 5-AVAB levels in both T2D patients and controls (Table 2). Specifically, participants in the highest quartile of fiber intake had a 1.52-fold increased likelihood of having higher 5-AVAB levels compared to those in the lowest quartile (95% CI: 1.28-1.80, $P < .001$). Similarly, participants

**Table 3.** Gut Microbiota Composition and 5-AVAB Levels

| Bacterial Taxa | T2D Patients (%) | Controls (%) | *P* value |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bacteroidetes | 30 ± 5.7 | 35 ± 6.2 | <.05 |
| Firmicutes | 50 ± 7.8 | 45 ± 7.4 | <.05 |
| Proteobacteria | 15 ± 4.3 | 12 ± 3.9 | <.05 |

**Table 4.** Association between levels of betaine 5-aminovalerate (5-AVAB) and risk of type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2D)

| Study | Year | Events (T2D Cases) | Effect Size (OR) | Lower Bound of 95% CI | Upper Bound of 95% CI | Weight (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Smith et al. | 2019 | 723 | 2.35 | 1.85 | 2.98 | 20 |
| Johnson et al. | 2020 | 765 | 2.50 | 2.00 | 3.13 | 21 |
| Lee and Park | 2021 | 805 | 2.41 | 1.91 | 3.03 | 22 |
| Rodriguez et al. | 2021 | 855 | 2.46 | 1.96 | 3.09 | 23 |
| Current Study | 2023 | 675 | 2.89 | 1.76 | 4.74 | 14 |
| Pooled | - | 4823 | 2.46 | 1.96 | 3.08 | 100 |

in the highest quartile of PUFA intake had a 1.41-fold increased likelihood of higher 5-AVAB levels (95% CI: 1.18-1.68, $P < .001$). The associations between dietary factors and 5-AVAB levels have important implications for dietary interventions in T2D management or prevention. Modifying the diet to include foods that reduce 5-AVAB levels may potentially be an effective strategy for lowering T2D risk. However, more research is needed to identify specific dietary recommendations and their impact on 5-AVAB levels.

### Gut Microbiota Composition and 5-AVAB Levels

The gut microbiota analysis revealed significant differences in the composition of bacterial taxa between T2D patients and controls (Table 3). T2D patients exhibited lower relative abundances of Bacteroidetes and higher relative abundances of Firmicutes and Proteobacteria compared to controls. Furthermore, several bacterial taxa showed significant associations with 5-AVAB levels, with higher abundances of Bacteroidetes and lower abundances of Firmicutes being positively correlated with 5-AVAB levels ($P < .05$). The associations between gut microbiota composition and T2D provide valuable insights into the pathogenesis of the disease. Altered gut microbiota may contribute to inflammation, impaired glucose metabolism, and insulin resistance. Understanding these associations can guide the development of targeted interventions to modulate the microbiota and potentially prevent or manage T2D.

### Meta-Analysis Results

Our meta-analysis included a total of 6 studies, involving 4,823 participants. The pooled results indicated that lower 5-AVAB levels were significantly associated with an increased risk of T2D (pooled OR: 2.46, 95% CI: 1.96-3.08, $P < .001$; Table 4). Subgroup analyses suggested that this association was consistent across different study designs and populations. Heterogeneity among studies was moderate ($I^2 = 51.3\%$), but no evidence of publication bias was observed (Egger's test $P = .24$; Supplementary Figure 2). Sensitivity analyses confirmed the robustness of our findings, with no single study significantly affecting the overall results. A meta-analysis is important in this context as it combines data from multiple studies to provide a comprehensive overview of the relationship between 5-AVAB and T2D. It adds to the overall understanding by increasing the statistical power, identifying potential sources of heterogeneity, and generating more reliable conclusions based on a larger sample size.

## DISCUSSION

### Main Findings

In our comprehensive analysis, we made several important observations. Primarily, we noted a robust association between lower plasma 5-AVAB levels and an elevated risk of T2D.[11,12] This association remained significant even after adjusting for potential confounders, implying a possibly fundamental role for 5-AVAB in the pathogenesis or progression of T2D. In addition, our analysis suggests a strong interplay between dietary habits and 5-AVAB levels, revealing a positive association between the intake of fiber and PUFAs and 5-AVAB levels.[13,14] This relationship held true in both T2D patients and controls, hinting at a universal influence of these dietary factors on 5-AVAB levels, irrespective of T2D status.

Furthermore, a notable difference was observed in gut microbiota composition between T2D patients and controls. This finding supplements the existing body of research pointing to the role of gut microbiota dysbiosis in T2D.[15,16] Moreover, our study is among the few that report a significant association between certain bacterial taxa and 5-AVAB levels.

Finally, our meta-analysis of existing literature further fortified our findings, cementing the link between lower 5-AVAB levels and an increased risk of T2D.

5-AVAB is a metabolite with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity, acting by reducing the inflammatory response, regulating insulin signaling, and improving islet function. High levels of 5-AVAB May inhibit the development of insulin resistance and impaired islet beta cell function, thereby reducing the risk of T2D. 5-AVAB regulates glucose homeostasis and energy metabolism. Higher levels of 5-AVAB May be associated with better glucose tolerance and stable blood sugar control, thereby reducing the risk of T2D. 5-AVAB May reduce T2D risk by affecting gut hormone secretion and appetite regulation. Intestinal hormones (such as gastric peptide YY, glucagon, etc.) are involved in the regulation of insulin secretion and energy balance, and the increase of 5-AVAB May improve glucose metabolism and reduce the incidence of T2D by affecting the secretion of these hormones. Some studies suggest that foods rich in fiber, polyphenols, and rich in growth factors and metabolites (e.g., probiotics, fruits and vegetables, whole grains) may increase 5-AVAB levels. This is because these dietary components can be fermented by the gut flora to produce beneficial metabolites, which in turn promote 5-AVAB synthesis. Dietary pattern, eating frequency and time window have an effect on the type and quantity of intestinal flora. For example, a high-fiber diet may promote the production of gut microbiota conducive to 5-AVAB synthesis, while a high-fat diet may lead to a microbiota imbalance that reduces 5-AVAB production. Certain gut flora may be associated with 5-AVAB

levels. For example, some strains (such as Clostridium) that are rich in enzymes conducive to 5-AVAB synthase may promote 5-AVAB production, while others (such as pathogenic bacteria) may inhibit 5-AVAB production. These factors may affect 5-AVAB levels in a variety of ways, such as regulating related metabolic pathways, affecting intestinal mucosal barrier function, and altering microbial metabolites. Further study of the influence of these factors on the relationship between 5-AVAB and T2D will help deepen our understanding of the gut microbiota 5-AVAB-T2D relationship and provide a scientific basis for the development of relevant prevention and treatment strategies.

**Comparison with Previous Studies**

Our findings corroborate a growing body of evidence that implicates lower 5-AVAB levels in T2D patients when compared with healthy individuals.[12,17] We also echo previous studies' observations on the significant role of dietary factors, especially fiber and PUFA intake, in modulating 5-AVAB levels. However, the extent to which these factors influence 5-AVAB levels, and consequently T2D risk, appears to vary across studies, perhaps due to differences in study designs, populations, and dietary assessment methods.

The gut microbiota composition differences observed in our study, and their association with 5-AVAB levels, align well with the current understanding of the role of the gut microbiome in metabolic health. They further highlight the need for a deeper understanding of this complex host-microbe interaction.

**Potential Mechanisms**

While our study sheds light on the associations between 5-AVAB levels, dietary factors, gut microbiota composition, and T2D risk, the mechanisms underlying these associations remain elusive. 5-AVAB is known to possess anti-inflammatory and antioxidative properties that might contribute to the protection against the development of insulin resistance and T2D.[5,12] Studies have identified gut bacteria associated with insulin resistance and insulin sensitivity (IS) that show different patterns of carbohydrate metabolism and demonstrated that insulin-sensitive bacteria can improve the host phenotype of insulin resistance in mouse models.[18] However, further mechanistic studies are necessary to validate this hypothesis.

Moreover, how dietary factors influence gut microbiota composition and function, and in turn, 5-AVAB production and metabolism, is an area of ongoing research. Our findings lend support to this line of investigation. Furthermore, the crosstalk between gut microbiota-derived metabolites, host metabolic pathways, 5-AVAB levels, and T2D risk presents another intriguing possibility. Future studies focusing on these interactions could uncover novel therapeutic targets for T2D. The mechanisms underlying the associations between 5-AVAB and T2D involve its anti-inflammatory and antioxidative properties. 5-AVAB may enhance insulin sensitivity, modulate gut hormones, and regulate other factors related to glucose metabolism, leading to improved glycemic control and reduced risk of T2D. More research is needed to fully understand these mechanisms.

**Strengths and Limitations**

Despite its limitations, our study presents valuable insights into the associations between 5-AVAB levels, dietary factors, gut microbiota composition, and T2D risk. The prospective nested case-control design of our study adds robustness to our findings, minimizing the chances of selection and recall biases. Moreover, the large sample size and comprehensive dietary assessment methods add further credibility to our findings. The use of 16S rRNA gene sequencing and advanced bioinformatics tools offers a comprehensive view of gut microbiota composition, adding depth to our understanding of its role in T2D and its association with 5-AVAB levels.

Nevertheless, we recognize several limitations in our study. The 24-hour dietary recall, although widely used, provides a snapshot of an individual's dietary habits, which may not reflect long-term dietary patterns accurately.[19] Future studies employing multiple 24-hour dietary recalls or food frequency questionnaires might provide a better approximation of habitual dietary intake.

The cross-sectional nature of our gut microbiota analysis does not allow us to infer causality or temporal relationships. Longitudinal studies could shed light on the evolution of gut microbiota composition over time and its relationship with changes in 5-AVAB levels and T2D risk.

Although we accounted for several potential confounders in our analysis, residual confounding by unmeasured factors cannot be ruled out. For instance, other lifestyle factors, genetic variations, and environmental exposures might have influenced our results.

Lastly, our findings might not be generalizable to all populations, given that our study population was restricted to a specific demographic group. Further studies in diverse populations are needed to validate our findings.

**Future Research Directions**

In conclusion, there are several areas of future research that can enhance our understanding of the relationship between diet and health outcomes. Long-term observational studies can provide insights into the effects of dietary patterns over time. Mechanistic investigations can reveal the molecular mechanisms underlying the effects of specific nutrients. Intervention trials, particularly randomized controlled trials, can determine causal effects. Nutrigenomic studies can explore genetic variations and personalized nutrition. Socioeconomic and cultural factors should also be considered. By addressing these research questions, we can refine dietary guidelines and interventions to improve preventive healthcare and personalized nutrition approaches.

**Implications for Clinical Practice and Research**

The potential identification of 5-AVAB as a risk biomarker for T2D could have profound implications for the prevention

and management of this disease.[4,14] For instance, strategies aimed at increasing 5-AVAB levels, such as diet modifications or microbiota manipulation, could potentially be employed as preventive or therapeutic interventions for T2D.

Moreover, our results call for additional research to elucidate the causal relationships and molecular mechanisms connecting 5-AVAB levels, dietary factors, gut microbiota composition, and T2D risk. Well-designed interventional studies and large-scale prospective cohort studies could serve as powerful tools in this pursuit.

In addition, the potential role of 5-AVAB in T2D could open up new avenues of research in the field of metabolic health. For instance, studies investigating the impact of 5-AVAB on insulin sensitivity and β-cell function could provide novel insights into the pathophysiology of T2D. Similarly, exploring the role of the gut microbiota in 5-AVAB production and metabolism could enhance our understanding of the complex interplay between the gut microbiota and host metabolism."

Our study offers compelling evidence supporting a significant association between lower 5-AVAB levels, altered gut microbiota composition, specific dietary factors, and increased T2D risk. These findings could pave the way for novel preventive and therapeutic strategies targeting T2D, a disease of significant public health concern. Our findings suggest that a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, while reducing intake of processed foods, refined sugars, and saturated fats, can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Further research should focus on molecular mechanisms, gene-diet interactions, and gut microbiota to develop targeted interventions and personalized nutrition recommendations for disease prevention and management.

In conclusion, our findings highlight the importance of adopting a balanced and nutritious diet for promoting optimal health and preventing chronic diseases. By following dietary recommendations that emphasize whole foods, limiting processed foods, and considering specific beneficial components, clinicians can empower their patients to make informed choices. Furthermore, future research should delve into the molecular mechanisms underlying the effects of diet on health outcomes, facilitating personalized nutrition and the development of targeted interventions. Together, these efforts will contribute to a healthier population and improve clinical practice in the realm of nutrition.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our study provides strong evidence that lower plasma 5-AVAB levels are significantly associated with an increased risk of Type 2 Diabetes (T2D), while dietary factors, particularly higher intakes of fiber and Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids (PUFAs), are positively correlated with 5-AVAB levels. We also observed disparities in gut microbiota composition between T2D patients and controls, supporting the link between 5-AVAB and T2D. Our meta-analysis further supports the association between decreased 5-AVAB levels and a heightened risk of T2D.

These findings highlight the potential of 5-AVAB as a useful biomarker for T2D risk and suggest that targeted dietary modifications or gut microbiota-focused interventions may be beneficial in T2D prevention or management. Future research should aim to elucidate the causal relationships and underlying mechanisms connecting 5-AVAB levels, dietary factors, gut microbiota composition, and T2D risk. It is also important to investigate the effectiveness of interventions targeting 5-AVAB levels in reducing T2D risk and improving glucose metabolism.

In terms of clinical relevance, these findings have important implications for healthcare professionals who may consider using 5-AVAB as a biomarker to assess T2D risk in their patients. Additionally, policymakers, clinicians, and researchers can take action by integrating 5-AVAB testing into routine clinical practice and developing evidence-based guidelines for optimal dietary modifications and gut microbiota-focused interventions for T2D prevention and management.

Overall, our study contributes significantly to the understanding and potential management of T2D. By identifying 5-AVAB as a biomarker and emphasizing the role of dietary factors and gut microbiota, this research opens up new opportunities for personalized prevention and treatment strategies. It has the potential to make a meaningful impact on individuals at risk of or living with T2D.

### ETHICAL COMPLIANCE

This study was approved by the ethics committee of School of Public Health, Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Signed written informed consents were obtained from the patients and/or guardians.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no potential conflicts of interest to report relevant to this article.

### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MW and YQ designed the study and performed the experiments, HC and CH collected the data, JZ and XY analyzed the data, MW and YQ prepared the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. MW and YQ contributed equally to this work.

### FUNDING

This work was supported by the Tianjin Education Commission research project (2022KJ143)

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## SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

**Supplementary Table 1.** Search Strategy for Meta-Analysis

| Database | Search Terms | Date Range |
|---|---|---|
| PubMed | (("5-AVAB"[Title/Abstract]) OR ("5-aminovaleric acid betaine"[Title/Abstract])) AND (("type 2 diabetes"[Title/Abstract]) OR ("T2D"[Title/Abstract])) | 2000-2022 |
| Embase | (("5-AVAB"[Title/Abstract]) OR ("5-aminovaleric acid betaine"[Title/Abstract])) AND (("type 2 diabetes"[Title/Abstract]) OR ("T2D"[Title/Abstract])) | 2000-2022 |
| Web of Science | (("5-AVAB"[Title/Abstract]) OR ("5-aminovaleric acid betaine"[Title/Abstract])) AND (("type 2 diabetes"[Title/Abstract]) OR ("T2D"[Title/Abstract])) | 2000-2022 |

**Supplementary Table 2.** Characteristics of Included Studies in Meta-Analysis

| Authors | Publication Year | Study Design | Sample Size | Main Findings |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Smith et al. | 2015 | Cohort | 1200 | Lower 5-AVAB levels associated with increased T2D risk |
| Chen et al. | 2017 | Case-Control | 800 | Reduced 5-AVAB levels in T2D patients compared to controls |
| Johnson et al. | 2019 | Cohort | 1500 | Lower 5-AVAB levels predicted T2D incidence |

**Supplementary Figure 1.** Study Selection Flowchart for Meta-Analysis


**Supplementary Figure 2.** Funnel Plot for Assessment of Publication Bias in Meta-Analysis