

PALNI KUNDRA

Biotechnology, Microbiology, Microbiome, Food Science



PERSONAL STATEMENT

Driven by scientific curiosity and a commitment to innovation, I leverage my multidisciplinary background to conduct cutting-edge research in metabolism and drug discovery. My Ph.D. expertise in gut microbiota metabolism, equips me to design and execute impactful studies on complex biological systems. With a track record of peer-reviewed publications demonstrating my research capabilities, I bring a deep understanding of metabolism, and passion for translating scientific findings into actionable steps for drug development and contributing to the advancement of novel therapeutic strategies for metabolic diseases. My experience in leading research projects, mentoring junior scientists, and collaborating with multidisciplinary teams positions me well to contribute effectively to early-stage drug discovery and development in a pharmaceutical setting.



KEY COMPETENCIES

- Possess in-depth knowledge across various scientific disciplines, including food science, microbiology, nutrition, gastroenterology, probiotics, biotechnology and biology.
- Proficient in translating complex scientific concepts into clear, engaging content, as well as translating scientific findings into actionable next steps.
- Proficient in designing, implementing, and executing research projects, encompassing laboratory techniques, statistics and bioinformatics.
- Proven ability to collaborate effectively with internal and external teams.



EDUCATION

- | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 2018

2023 | ● ETH Zurich
Doctorate (PhD, Dr. sc.)
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Christophe Lacroix | 📍 Zurich, Switzerland |
| 2016

2018 | ● McGill University
Masters of Science (M.Sc.)
Supervisor: Prof. Jennifer Ronholm
CGPA: 3.87/ 4 | 📍 Montréal, Canada |
| 2011

2015 | ● Guru Nanak Dev University
Bachelor of Food Science and Technology
Advisor: Prof. Bhartendu Singla
CGPA: 8.7/ 10 (<i>Gold medalist</i>) | 📍 Amritsar, India |



WORK AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Sep 2018

Jun 2023 | ● Scientific Assistant
ETH Zurich | 📍 Zurich, Switzerland |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|
- **Supervisor:** Prof. Dr. Christophe Lacroix
 - Completed a multi-year research project investigating the modulatory potential of dietary and gut-microbially produced vitamin B9 and B12 on the complex gut microbiota, as well as on single next generation probiotic gut microbes.
 - Led the planning and execution of laboratory experiments, developed experimental and analytical methods (UHPLC-UV/MS), and analyzed metagenomic and other data types.
 - Completed project deliverables by preparing research findings for publication in scientific journals.
 - Presented research findings at scientific conferences, effectively communicating complex scientific concepts to diverse audiences.
 - Mentored Bachelor's and Master's students throughout their thesis projects, and facilitated a semester laboratory course, enhancing hands-on learning experiences.



AWARDS AND MEDALS

Gold medal (Bachelor Studies)
University topper 2015

Poster presentation award
Second prize, Green tea ice cream
Presented at science exhibition
2015

COMPUTATIONAL SKILLS

Bioinformatics skills:
metagenomic data analysis
Programming: R, Bash
Version control: git
Project management: GitHub

LANGUAGES

English (Native, C1)
German (Written A2, spoken B1)
Hindi (Native)
Punjabi (Native)

CONTACT INFO

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MORE INFO


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℞ [Palni_Kundra](#)
🌐 [pkundra](#)


May-Sep 2017	Graduate research project McGill University <div> 📍 Montréal, Canada </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor: Prof. Jennifer Ronholm • Conducted whole-genome SNP-based analysis to identify changes under laboratory conditions in major foodborne pathogens responsible for global outbreaks. • Provided support for preparing the manuscript for publication.
Jan-Feb 2015	Student research assistant Guru Nanak Dev University <div> 📍 Amritsar, India </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor: Prof. Pankaj Gupta • Developed an innovative food product - Green tea ice cream. • Performed sensory and organoleptic evaluation. • Presented the product at scientific conference.
Jul 2014 Mar 2015	Student research assistant Guru Nanak Dev University <div> 📍 Amritsar, India </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor: Prof. Bhartendu Singla • Developed various innovative soy-based food products to enhance gluten-free product.
May-Jun 2013	Research internship Indian Council of Agricultural Research <div> 📍 Ludhiana, India </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor: Dr. Pranita Jaiswal • Applied a non-destructive quality control approach to develop spectrophotometric method for the detection of Soy-milk adulteration in cow milk. • Performed spectrophotometer analysis.
Jun 2013 & Jul 2014	Industrial internship Markfed Canneries <div> 📍 Jalandhar, India </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed microbiological testing and applied quality control assurance techniques.
Jun-Jul 2013	Industrial internship Verka Milk plant <div> 📍 Jalandhar, India </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed microbiological testing and applied quality control assurance techniques.


SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

● Peer-reviewed Publications

Palni Kundra, Anna Greppi, Monica Duppenhaler, Serafina Plüss, Benoit Pugin, Christophe Lacroix, Annelies Geirnaert. Vitamin B12 analogues from gut microbes and diet differentially impact commensal propionate producers of the human gut. **2024**. *Frontiers in Nutrition*.  [10.3389/fnut.2024.1360199](https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2024.1360199)

Palni Kundra, Annelies Geirnaert, Benoit Pugin, Paola Morales Martinez, Christophe Lacroix, Anna Greppi. Healthy adult gut microbiota sustains its own vitamin B12 requirement in an in vitro batch fermentation model. **2022**. *Frontiers in Nutrition*.  [10.3389/fnut.2022.1070155](https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2022.1070155)


Palni Kundra, Carole Rachmühl, Christophe Lacroix, Annelies Geirnaert. Role of dietary micronutrients on gut microbial dysbiosis and modulation in inflammatory bowel disease. **2021**. *Molecular Nutrition & Food Research*.  [10.1002/mnfr.201901271](https://doi.org/10.1002/mnfr.201901271)

Nicholas Petronella, **Palni Kundra**, Olivia Auclair, Karine Hébert, Mary Rao, Kyle Kingsley, Katrien De Bruyne, Swapna Banerjee, Alexander Gill, Franco Pagotto, Sandeep Tamber, Jennifer Ronholm. Changes detected in the genome sequences of *Escherichia coli*, *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, and *Salmonella enterica* after serial subculturing. **2019**. *Canadian Journal of Microbiology*.  [10.1139/cjm-2019-0235](https://doi.org/10.1139/cjm-2019-0235)

Palni Kundra, Annelies Geirnaert, Benoit Pugin, Serafina Plüss, Susanna Kariluoto, Christophe Lacroix, Anna Greppi. Effect of microbially-produced vitamin B9 on the growth and metabolism of human gut microbes. **2024**. submitted to *BMC microbiology*.

THESES

Jun 2023

- Doctor of Sciences**
Palni Kundra, 2023. Dr. sc. Thesis. The effect of exogenous and endogenous vitamin B9 and B12 on microbial growth and metabolism in the human gut. : [10.3929/ethz-b-000641198](https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000641198)

Jan 2018

- Master of Science**
Palni Kundra, 2018. M.Sc. Research project. Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms in major food-borne pathogens.

MENTORING

Master projects at ETH Zurich

Monica Duppenthaler Vitamin B9 and B12 driven trophic interactions in the human gut. *Master in Food Science*. Jul 2021 - Jan 2022 (Thesis)

Janik Mutter Vitamin B9 production and cross feeding among human gut microbial strains. *Master in Biology*. Mar 2021 - Jul 2021 (Research project)

Bachelor thesis projects at ETH Zurich

Sabina Galli B-vitamin bio-factory in the gut: In-vitro vitamin B9 production and utilization by human gut microbes. *Bachelor in Food Science*. Jul 2022 - Oct 2022

Sara De Crescenzo In-vitro Vitamin B12 Production by Human Gut Bacteria. *Bachelor in Food Science*. Jul 2021 - Oct 2021


Giuliano Menegon B-vitamin sharing: In-silico and in-vitro study to determine B9 and B12 cross-feeding between human gut microbial strains. *Bachelor in Food Science*. Jun 2020 - Nov 2020

Lucie Kuhn Give them vitamins: Impact of B9 and B12 on the acetate and butyrate production on human gut microbes. *Bachelor in Food Science*. Nov 2019 - Feb 2020

Blandine Genet Give them vitamins: Impact of B9 and B12 on the butyrate and propionate production on human gut microbes. *Bachelor in Food Science*. Jun 2019 - Sep 2019

TEACHING

2019
-
2022

- 752-5004-00L: Food Biotechnology Laboratory Course**
 ETH Zurich  Zurich, Switzerland
 Main responsible for cheese practical (2019 & 2020) and sour dough bread practical (2021 & 2022).

Semester course


ORAL AND POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Sep
2021

- Human Gut Microbial Strains Produce Vitamin B12**
 6th International Vitamin Conference  Denmark


Oral & Poster

Jul
2021

- In-Vitro Vitamin B12 Production by Human Gut Microbial Strains**
 ANAEROBE 2021: THE MICROBIOTA AND BEYOND  Online

Poster

Feb
2015

- Development of soy-based product and their organoleptic evaluation**
 Advances in agricultural Science & biotechnology, *DAV College Jalandhar*  India

Poster

Jan
2015

- "Green tea ice cream"**
 Science exhibition, *DAV College Jalandhar*  India



WORKSHOPS/ COURSES (NOT ON TRANSCRIPTS)

- 2023

● **PMDA Summer School**
 Roche 📍 Basel, Switzerland
 Predictive modelling and data analytics summer school to solve problems in drug discovery and development.

- 2022

● **Project Management for research – for doctoral students**
 ETH Zurich 📍 Zurich, Switzerland
 Project risk management, project management.

- 2021

● **Scientific poster design**
 University of Zurich 📍 Zurich, Switzerland
 content structure, typography do's and don'ts, design principles, design grids, design tools, image editing, perception, color theory.

- 2021

● **Energy and stress management: How to perform in the storm**
 University of Zurich 📍 Zurich, Switzerland
 Energy management, understand obstacles and overcome them, achieve targeted change.

- 2021

● **Time and self management for PhD Candidates**
 ETH Zurich 📍 Zurich, Switzerland
 Assess habits, values, goals, energy, and time management techniques.

- 2021

● **Leadership skills for PhD Candidates**
 University of Zurich 📍 Zurich, Switzerland
 Management, leadership, needs analysis, behavior, destructive leadership, and case studies.

- 2020

● **Statistics for Experimental Research**
 ETH Zurich 📍 Zurich, Switzerland
 Experimental designs, statistical analyses using R, report analyses and results in a scientifically appropriate manner.

- 2018

● **Mass spectrometry-based metabolomics - from theory to practice**
 Functional Genomics Center of University and ETH Zurich 📍 Zurich, Switzerland
 Metabolomics overview, and data analysis and interpretation.

- 2017

● **Introduction to genomic analysis**
 Compute Canada & University of British Columbia 📍 (Online) Canada
 UNIX programming, alignment, Variant calling and annotation, data visualization, and RNA-Seq including statistical analysis.

- 2014

● **36th Post-harvest technology - short course**
 University of California, Davis 📍 Davis, USA
 Advanced Crops handling and harvesting systems.