***eLife’s* transparent reporting form**

We encourage authors to provide detailed information *within their submission* to facilitate the interpretation and replication of experiments. Authors can upload supporting documentation to indicate the use of appropriate reporting guidelines for health-related research (see [EQUATOR Network](http://www.equator-network.org/%20)), life science research (see the [BioSharing Information Resource](https://biosharing.org/)), or the [ARRIVE guidelines](http://www.plosbiology.org/article/info%3Adoi/10.1371/journal.pbio.1000412) for reporting work involving animal research. Where applicable, authors should refer to any relevant reporting standards documents in this form.

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* You should state whether an appropriate sample size was computed when the study was being designed
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* If no explicit power analysis was used, you should describe how you decided what sample (replicate) size (number) to use

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* You should report how often each experiment was performed
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* For each experiment, you should identify the statistical tests used, exact values of N, definitions of center, methods of multiple test correction, and dispersion and precision measures (e.g., mean, median, SD, SEM, confidence intervals; and, for the major substantive results, a measure of effect size (e.g., Pearson's r, Cohen's d)
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* Indicate how samples were allocated into experimental groups (in the case of clinical studies, please specify allocation to treatment method); if randomization was used, please also state if restricted randomization was applied
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* Where provided, these should be in the most useful format, and they can be uploaded as “Source data” files linked to a main figure or table
* Include model definition files including the full list of parameters used
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Please indicate the figures or tables for which source data files have been provided:

Systems of ordinary differential equations are available in a Mathematica notebook (.nb) and R files provided online at https://github.com/drmsmith/microbiomeR. These include code to reproduce all results from Part 1, i.e. Figures 1 to 3 and Figures S1-S7.