

## Short chain fatty acids in the human colon

The human colon contains a luxuriant mixed culture of bacteria, probably at least 175 g. The special property of these bacteria is their metabolism, which is in the main strictly anaerobic, the end-products being primarily the short chain, or volatile, fatty acids, acetic, propionic, and butyric acid. These are the principal known anions in the colon but, although this has often been reported,<sup>1</sup> little thought has been given to the possible implications.