nature research

Corresponding author(s): Anika Lehmann

☐ Initial submission ☒ Revised version ☐ Final submission

Life Sciences Reporting Summary

Nature Research wishes to improve the reproducibility of the work that we publish. This form is intended for publication with all accepted life science papers and provides structure for consistency and transparency in reporting. Every life science submission will use this form; some list items might not apply to an individual manuscript, but all fields must be completed for clarity.

For further information on the points included in this form, see Reporting Life Sciences Research. For further information on Nature Research policies, including our data availability policy, see Authors & Referees and the Editorial Policy Checklist.

Experimental design

1. Sample size

Describe how sample size was determined.

We collected all available studies machting the inclusion criteria to ensure the largest possible sample size for the analyses.

2. Data exclusions

Describe any data exclusions.

Data/studies were excluded when at least one of the following criteria were not fulfilled:
(i) studies needed to report soil aggregation measurements when a test organism (i.e. single species) or a defined organism group (e.g. natural, soil-extracted Glomeromycota mixture) was present or not, including organism-free or organism-reduced controls. In the case of field studies usually involving earthworms, ants and termites, adjacent soil samples differing in biota composition had been measured for soil aggregation.
(ii) The growth substrate had to be soil or a soil-sand mixture and usually involved sterilized substrates (e.g. autoclaved).
(iii) No effects of added stress factors (e.g. reduced irrigation, salt or heavy metal application, tillage or fertilization) were included and only data from the last harvest were included.
(iv) In cases where a paper presented several experimental treatment combinations, we chose those in which, no additional organic matter application and no plant as additional factor in the test system were used.

3. Replication

Describe whether the experimental findings were reliably reproduced.

We applied sensitivity analyses (subset analyses and "disproportinal impact of studies" approach) to ensure robustness of our analysis outcomes.
Other "types of replication" are not applicable to meta-analyses.

4. Randomization

Describe how samples/organisms/participants were allocated into experimental groups.

There are no experimental groups.
We collected data from all available studies fulfilling our inclusion criteria. Data were collected for pre-determined variables (e.g. treatment mean, variance , replicates, soil variables, taxon information...).

5. Blinding

Describe whether the investigators were blinded to group allocation during data collection and/or analysis.

Since there are no experimental groups in our analyses, no blinding was needed.

Note: all studies involving animals and/or human research participants must disclose whether blinding and randomization were used.

6. Statistical parameters

For all figures and tables that use statistical methods, confirm that the following items are present in relevant figure legends (or in the Methods section if additional space is needed).

n/a	Confirmed
☐	☒ The exact sample size (*n*) for each experimental group/condition, given as a discrete number and unit of measurement (animals, litters, cultures, etc.)
☐	☒ A description of how samples were collected, noting whether measurements were taken from distinct samples or whether the same sample was measured repeatedly
☒	☐ A statement indicating how many times each experiment was replicated
☐	☒ The statistical test(s) used and whether they are one- or two-sided (note: only common tests should be described solely by name; more complex techniques should be described in the Methods section)
☒	☐ A description of any assumptions or corrections, such as an adjustment for multiple comparisons
☐	☒ The test results (e.g. *P* values) given as exact values whenever possible and with confidence intervals noted
☐	☒ A clear description of statistics including central tendency (e.g. median, mean) and variation (e.g. standard deviation, interquartile range)
☐	☒ Clearly defined error bars

See the web collection on statistics for biologists for further resources and guidance.

Software

Policy information about availability of computer code

7. Software

Describe the software used to analyze the data in this study.	For analyses, we used the statistical software R and associated packages (metafor, metagear, boot, phytools)

For manuscripts utilizing custom algorithms or software that are central to the paper but not yet described in the published literature, software must be made available to editors and reviewers upon request. We strongly encourage code deposition in a community repository (e.g. GitHub). *Nature Methods* guidance for providing algorithms and software for publication provides further information on this topic.

Materials and reagents

Policy information about availability of materials

8. Materials availability

Indicate whether there are restrictions on availability of unique materials or if these materials are only available for distribution by a for-profit company.	We present the two datatables used for all analyses in the supplementary materials (supplementary datafile/ material 2).

9. Antibodies

Describe the antibodies used and how they were validated for use in the system under study (i.e. assay and species).	No antibodies were used.

10. Eukaryotic cell lines

a. State the source of each eukaryotic cell line used.	No cell lines were used.
b. Describe the method of cell line authentication used.	No cell lines were used.
c. Report whether the cell lines were tested for mycoplasma contamination.	No cell lines were used.
d. If any of the cell lines used are listed in the database of commonly misidentified cell lines maintained by ICLAC, provide a scientific rationale for their use.	No cell lines were used.

Animals and human research participants

Policy information about studies involving animals; when reporting animal research, follow the ARRIVE guidelines

11. Description of research animals

Provide details on animals and/or animal-derived materials used in the study.	No animals were used.

Policy information about studies involving human research participants

12. Description of human research participants

Describe the covariate-relevant population characteristics of the human research participants.	No human participants were involeved.