

World Health Organization Enters Damage Control Mode

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#) ✓ Fact Checked

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › The Wuhan Institute of Virology is the only biosafety lab in China that studies human coronaviruses. These viruses include RaTG13, the closest known ancestor to SARS-CoV-2, obtained from miners who fell ill with severe respiratory illness after working in a Mojiang mine in 2012
- › The World Health Organization's investigative team charged with identifying the origin of SARS-CoV-2 has issued a highly-criticized report in which it dismisses the lab-accident theory offhand
- › Molecular biologist Richard Ebright, Ph.D., member of the Institutional Biosafety Committee of Rutgers University and the Working Group on Pathogen Security of the state of New Jersey, recently called out the members of the WHO-instigated investigative team as "participants in disinformation"
- › In response to growing critique, WHO director general and 13 other world leaders have joined the U.S. government in expressing "frustration with the level of access China granted an international mission to Wuhan," and agree additional collaborative studies that include more comprehensive data sharing are needed
- › A number of U.S. officials have admitted that the lab-accident theory either remains the most credible, or needs to remain an option open for inquiry. These include former CDC director Dr. Robert Redfield, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, former deputy national security adviser Matthew Pottinger, former lead investigator for the U.S. State Department's COVID-19 task force David Asher and an assessment report by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency

While the mainstream media has, by and large, dismissed the theory that SARS-CoV-2 was created and leaked from a high-security biocontainment lab in Wuhan, China, a number of high-ranking U.S. officials are sticking to it, and there's probably good reason for this.

On the whole, if the virus was actually a natural occurrence, a series of improbable coincidences would have had to transpire. Meanwhile, a series of highly probable "coincidences" point to the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) being the most likely source, and to dismiss them as a whole simply doesn't make sense.

Media Struggle to Prop Up Unproven Zoonotic Theory

I first mentioned that the outbreak had the hallmarks of a laboratory escape in an [article we posted well over a year ago](#), February 4, 2020. On the upside, some members of the media are now finally starting to inch toward more honest reporting on this — probably because U.S. officials keep leaning that way.

That doesn't mean some aren't still trying to defend the official narrative. Take The New York Times, for example. The original headline of its March 26, 2021, article about Dr. Robert Redfield, former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, read: "Ex-CDC Director Favors Debunked Covid-19 Origin Theory."¹

Three days later, that headline was toned down to: "The CDC's Ex-Director Offers No Evidence in Favoring Speculation That the Coronavirus Originated in a Lab,"² with a correction notice noting that the earlier headline "referred incorrectly to a theory on the origins of the coronavirus. The theory is unproven, not debunked."

Well, the truth is, all other theories are equally unproven — and are riddled with far more holes. The theory that the virus arose through natural mutation, for example, looks like Swiss cheese in comparison to the lab-leak theory.

In a February 16, 2021, article³ in Independent Science News, molecular biologist and virologist Jonathan Latham, Ph.D., and Allison Wilson, Ph.D., a molecular biologist, reviewed the evidence for a laboratory origin and the reasons why a zoonotic origin "will

never be found.” I also summarized their review in [“How We Know SARS-CoV-2 Leaked From a Chinese Lab.”](#)

The half-baked idea brought forth by the World Health Organization’s investigative team, that the virus somehow naturally evolved in some unknown part of the world and then piggy-backed into Wuhan on top of frozen food, is held together by even fewer facts.

Among the more compelling “coincidences” that hint at lab-origin are the facts that the WIV has admitted storing and working with bat coronaviruses collected significant distances away from the lab, and that it’s the only biosafety lab in China that studies human coronaviruses. These viruses include RaTG13,⁴ the closest known ancestor to SARS-CoV-2, obtained from miners who fell ill with severe respiratory illness after working in a Mojiang mine in 2012.

WHO COVID Report ‘Totally Flawed’

In a March 30, 2021, opinion piece in The Washington Post,⁵ Josh Rogin accurately points out that the WHO’s report⁶ on the origin of SARS-CoV-2 is so flawed, “a real investigation has yet to take place.” We simply cannot count that report as the result of a true investigative effort.

“Determining the origin of the SARS-CoV-2 virus should have nothing to do with politics,” he writes.⁷ “It is a forensic question, one that requires thorough investigation of all possible theories, and one that should encompass both the scenario that the virus jumped from animals to humans in nature as well as one related to human error in a Wuhan lab.

But a fatally flawed investigation by the World Health Organization and Chinese officials and experts only muddies the waters, and it places the WHO further at odds with the U.S. government and the Biden administration.”

As noted by Rogin and many others, the investigation was far from independent and transparent, as China was allowed to select its members, who then relied on their Chinese counterparts when it came to data collection. It’s no surprise then that this

team decided the natural origin theory is the most credible, while the lab-accident theory is summarily dismissed as unworthy of further consideration and study.

In a March 25, 2021, CNN interview,⁸ Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated, “We’ve got real concerns about the methodology and the process that went into that report, including the fact that the government in Beijing apparently helped to write it.” Rogin adds:⁹

“Specifically, declassified U.S. intelligence, confirmed by Blinken’s own State Department,¹⁰ alleges that the WIV was conducting undisclosed research on bat coronaviruses, had secret research projects with the Chinese military, and failed to disclose that several lab workers got sick with COVID-like symptoms in autumn 2019.”

Someone’s Not Telling the Truth

According to the WHO report, the labs “were well-managed, with a staff health monitoring program with no reporting of COVID-19 compatible respiratory illness during the weeks/months prior to December 2019.” “In other words, the WHO is saying the U.S. intelligence is wrong,” Rogin writes.¹¹

Not a word is mentioned in the report about U.S. government claims that the WIV engaged in the very research required to create a novel coronavirus with the specific affinity to infect human cells.

Recently, Shi Zhengli, who heads bat coronavirus research at the WIV spoke at a Rutgers University seminar, calling the WIV’s research “open” and “transparent.” Former deputy national security adviser Matthew Pottinger disagrees. In an interview with Lesley Stahl on 60 Minutes, he said:¹²

“There was a direct order from Beijing to destroy all viral samples – and they didn’t volunteer to share the genetic sequences. There is a body of research that’s been taking place, conducted by the Chinese military in collaboration with the WIV, which has not been acknowledged by the Chinese government.

We've seen the data. I've personally seen the data. We don't know [why the military were in that lab]. It is a major lead that needs to be pursued by the press, certainly by the WHO."

As noted by Pottinger, Shi published studies showing how bat coronaviruses were manipulated to render them more infectious to humans, and the U.S. government has in the past received reports of safety concerns due to lax standards at the WIV.

"They were doing research specifically on coronaviruses that attach to the ACE2 receptors in human lungs just like the COVID-19 virus," Pottinger told Stahl.¹³

"It's circumstantial evidence. But it's a pretty potent bullet point when you consider that the place where this pandemic emerged was a few kilometers away from the WIV."

US State Department Suspects Lab Leak

In a March 21, 2021, interview with Sky News Australia,¹⁴ David Asher, former lead investigator for the U.S. State Department's task force that looked into the **origins of COVID-19**, also stated that the data they collected "made us feel the Wuhan Institute was highly probably the source of the COVID pandemic."

According to Asher, three workers at the WIV who worked with the RatG13 coronavirus – the closest relative to SARS-CoV-2 identified to date – appear to have actually been the first cluster of cases of COVID-19. They fell ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 as early as October 2019. At least one of the workers required hospitalization.

He also pointed out there is evidence in the genetic sequence of SARS-CoV-2 suggesting it's been synthetically altered. It has the backbone of a bat coronavirus, combined with a pangolin receptor and "some sort of humanized mice transceptor." "These things don't naturally make sense," Asher said, adding that experts around the world agree that the odds of this configuration occurring naturally is "very low."

Another troubling indicator that something was amiss at the WIV was the Chinese government's taking down of a WIV database in September 2019. According to the

Chinese, this was done because of “thousands of hacking attempts.”

However, Asher pointed out many other databases were taken offline around the same time as well.¹⁵ The Chinese even tried to remove data posted in a European database containing viral sequencing from patients exhibiting COVID-19-related symptoms. Interestingly, those sequences included adenovirus, which is a vaccine vector. This, Asher said, could indicate that SARS-CoV-2 is part of a vaccine developed in response to a **biological weapon**.

In an earlier article¹⁶ by The Sun, Asher is quoted saying the WIV “was operating a secret, classified program,” and that “In my view ... it was a biological weapons program.” He stops short of accusing China of intentional release, however, which also would not make sense from a bioweapon point of view. Instead, he said he believes it was a weapon vector that, during development, “somehow leaked.”¹⁷

“ They were using these viruses in a BSL-2 lab and, we now know, infecting animals. So that creates the opportunity for a lab leak. It might not be the most likely scenario on how this virus got out, but it has to remain a scenario. ~ Dr. Scott Gottlieb ”

A March 27, 2020, assessment report by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency also concluded SARS-CoV-2 was likely an accidental release from an infectious diseases laboratory, but stops short of calling it a biological weapon.¹⁸ Asher also told Sky News¹⁹ he’s never seen a more systematic cover-up, and The Sun²⁰ quotes him as saying that “Motive, cover-up, conspiracy, all the hallmarks of guilt are associated with this.”

Former FDA Commissioner Weighs in on Lab Origin

March 28, 2021, former FDA commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb, now a board member of Pfizer (producer of one of the **COVID vaccines**), weighed in on the origin of the pandemic in a Face the Nation interview, saying:²¹

“It looks like the WHO report was an attempt to try to support the Chinese narrative ... You know, the lab leak theory doesn't seem like a plausible theory unless you aggregate the biggest collection of coronaviruses and put them in a lab, a minimum-security lab in the middle of a densely-populated center and experiment on animals, which is exactly what the Wuhan Institute of Virology did.

They were using these viruses in a BSL-2 lab and, we now know, infecting animals. So that creates the opportunity for a lab leak. It might not be the most likely scenario on how this virus got out, but it has to remain a scenario. And I think at the end of the day, we're never going to fully discharge that possibility. What we're going to have here is a battle of competing narratives.”

WHO Enters Damage Control Mode

In response to growing critique, WHO director general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and 13 other world leaders have joined the U.S. government in expressing “frustration with the level of access China granted an international mission to Wuhan.” As reported by The Washington Post, March 30, 2021:²²

“Ghebreyesus said in a briefing to member states ... that he expected ‘future collaborative studies to include more timely and comprehensive data sharing’ – the most pointed comments to date from an agency that has been solicitous toward China through most of the pandemic.

He said there is a particular need for a ‘full analysis’ of the role of animal markets in Wuhan and that the report did not conduct an ‘extensive enough’ assessment of the possibility the virus was introduced to humans through a laboratory incident ...

The United States, Britain, South Korea, Israel, Japan and others issued a joint statement²³ ... expressing concern. ‘Together, we support a transparent and independent analysis and evaluation, free from interference and undue influence,’ it reads ...

Tedros said²⁴ ... that mission team members raised concerns to him about access to raw data needed for the report ... 'The team reports that the first detected case had symptom onset on the 8th of December 2019. But to understand the earliest cases, scientists would benefit from full access to data, including biological samples from at least September 2019,' he said."

WHO Investigation Team Accused of Spreading Disinformation

In a March 2020 interview with Independent Science News,²⁵ molecular biologist Richard Ebright, Ph.D., laboratory director at the Waksman Institute of Microbiology and member of the Institutional Biosafety Committee of Rutgers University and the Working Group on Pathogen Security of the state of New Jersey, called out the members of the WHO-instigated investigative team as "participants in disinformation."

Ebright was one of 26 scientists who signed an open letter²⁶ demanding a full and unrestricted forensic investigation into the origins of the pandemic, published in the Wall Street Journal and French Le Monde, March 4, 2021. When asked to describe the shortcomings of the WHO-China team's investigation, he responded:

"A credible investigation would have had Terms of Reference that: 1) Acknowledged the possibility of laboratory origin, 2) Ensured access of investigators to records, samples, personnel, and facilities at the Wuhan laboratories that handle bat SARS-related coronaviruses,

3) Enabled collection of evidence, not mere meet-and-greet photo-ops, 4) Authorized an investigation of months, not mere days, and 5) A credible investigation also would have had conflict-of-interest-free investigators, not persons who were subjects of the research and/or closely associated with subjects of the investigation ...

It is crucial that any team reviewing the issues include not only research scientists, but also biosafety, biosecurity, and science policy specialists."

Ebright, who has repeatedly called the WHO mission “a charade,” stated that “its members were willing – and, in at least one case, enthusiastic – participants in disinformation.” Importantly, the terms of reference for the investigation were prenegotiated, and did not include even the possibility of a laboratory origin. He’s also highly critical of the inclusion of Peter Daszak, whose conflicts of interest alone are enough to invalidate the investigation.

“Daszak was the contractor who funded the laboratory at WIV that potentially was the source of the virus (with subcontracts from \$200 million from the US Department of State and \$7 million from the US National Institutes of Health), and he was a collaborator and co-author on research projects at the laboratory,” Ebright noted.

What Do We Know?

While another signer of the open letter, Dr. Steven Quay, claims to have calculated²⁷ the lab-origin hypothesis as having a 99.8% probability of being correct, Ebright is unwilling to assign relative probabilities to either theory. Rather, he insists a truly thorough forensic investigation and analysis is what is required, as there is biological evidence going in both directions. He explains:

“The genome sequence of the outbreak virus indicates that its progenitor was either the horseshoe-bat coronavirus RaTG13, or a closely related bat coronavirus.

RaTG13 was collected by Wuhan Institute of Virology in 2013 from a horseshoe-bat colony in a mine in Yunnan province, where miners had died from a SARS-like pneumonia in 2012, was partly sequenced by WIV in 2013-2016, was fully sequenced by WIV in 2018-2019, and was published by WIV in 2020.

Bat coronaviruses are present in nature in multiple parts of China. Therefore, the first human infection could have occurred as a natural accident, with a virus passing from a bat to a human, possibly through another animal. There is clear

precedent for this. The first entry of the SARS virus into the human population occurred as a natural accident in a rural part of Guangdong province in 2002.

But bat coronaviruses are also collected and studied by laboratories in multiple parts of China, including the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Therefore, the first human infection also could have occurred as a laboratory accident, with a virus accidentally infecting a field collection staffer, a field survey staffer, or a laboratory staffer, followed by transmission from the staffer to the public.

There also is clear precedent for this. The second, third, fourth and fifth entries of the SARS virus into human populations occurred as a laboratory accident in Singapore in 2003, a laboratory accident in Taipei in 2003, and two separate laboratory accidents in Beijing in 2004.

At this point in time, there is no secure basis to assign relative probabilities to the natural-accident hypothesis and the laboratory-accident hypothesis. Nevertheless, there are three lines of circumstantial evidence that are worth noting.

- 1. First, the outbreak occurred in Wuhan, a city of 11 million persons that does not contain horseshoe-bat colonies; that is tens of kilometers from, and that is outside the flight range of, the nearest known horseshoe-bat colonies. Furthermore, the outbreak occurred at a time of year when horseshoe bats are in hibernation and do not leave colonies.*
- 2. Second, the outbreak occurred in Wuhan, on the doorstep of the laboratory that conducts the world's largest research project on horseshoe bat viruses, that has the world's largest collection of horseshoe-bat viruses, and that possessed and worked with the world's closest sequenced relative of the outbreak virus ...*
- 3. Third, the bat-SARS-related-coronavirus projects at the Wuhan Institute of Virology used personal protective equipment (usually just gloves; sometimes not even gloves) and biosafety standards (usually just biosafety level 2) that would pose very high risk of infection of field-*

collection, field-survey, or laboratory staff upon contact with a virus having the transmission properties of SARS-CoV-2.”

Who’s Qualified to Opine on Viral Origin?

When asked “What would you say to the scientists who declined to comment on the open letter because it does not come from virologists?” Ebricht responded:²⁸

“The claim is unsound. There were virologists among the signers of the Open Letter. There even were coronavirologists among the signers of the Open Letter. More important, COVID-19 affects every person on the planet. Not just virologists ...

Microbiologists and molecular biologists are as qualified as virologists to assess the relevant science and science policies. Virology is a subset, not a superset, of microbiology and molecular biology. The sequencing, sequence analysis, cell culture, animal-infection studies and other laboratory procedures used by virologists are not materially different from the procedures used by other microbiologists and molecular biologists.”

Is Gain-of-Function Research Ever Justifiable?

Clearly, getting to the bottom of the origin of SARS-CoV-2 is crucial if we are to prevent a similar pandemic from erupting in the future. If **gain-of-function research** was in fact involved, we need to know, so that steps can either be taken to prevent another leak (which is not likely possible) or to dismantle and ban such research altogether for the common good.

As long as we are creating the risk, the benefit will be secondary. Any scientific or medical gains made from this kind of research pales in comparison to the incredible risks involved if weaponized pathogens are released, and it doesn’t matter if it’s by accident or on purpose. This sentiment has been echoed by others in a variety of scientific publications.^{29,30,31,32}

Considering the potential for a massively lethal pandemic, I believe it's safe to say that BSL 3 and 4 laboratories pose a very real and serious existential threat to humanity.

Historical facts tell us accidental exposures and releases have already happened, and we only have our lucky stars to thank that none have turned into pandemics taking the lives of tens of millions, as was predicted at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seeing how scientists have already figured out a way to mutate SARS-CoV-2 such that it evades human antibodies, as detailed in "[Lab Just Made a More Dangerous COVID Virus](#)," having a frank, open discussion about the scientific merits of this kind of work is more pertinent than ever before.

If SARS-CoV-2 really was the result of zoonotic spillover, the easiest and most effective way to quash "conspiracy theories" about a lab origin would be to present compelling evidence for a plausible theory. So far, that hasn't happened, and as noted by Latham and Wilson, the most likely reason for that is because the virus does not have a natural zoonotic origin, and you cannot find that which does not exist.

Summary

Ideally, we need to reevaluate the usefulness of the WHO. Strong evidence indicates it is heavily influenced, if not outright controlled by Bill Gates. On the whole, it seems it would be far wiser to decentralize pandemic planning from the global and federal levels to the state and local levels. Both medicine and government work best when individualized and locally applied.

Sadly, even though this is clearly the best strategy for successfully addressing any truly serious infectious threat, the likelihood of this happening is very close to zero.

This is largely due to decades of careful planning by the technocrats that have carefully placed their surrogates in virtually every arena of global government, finances and media, which allows them to easily dictate their propaganda campaigns and censor or deplatform virtually anyone who disagrees and seeks to provide a balanced counter-narrative.

Sources and Reference

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