

Message

From: David Morens
[REDACTED]

Sent: 9/9/2021 4:34:31 PM

To: Peter Daszak
[REDACTED]

CC: Garry, Robert F
[REDACTED]; Kristian G.
Andersen [REDACTED]
Edward Holmes
[REDACTED];
Jason Gale
[REDACTED];
Kasmussen, Angie
[REDACTED];
Robert Kessler
[REDACTED];
Stephen Goldstein
[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: here's the latest line of attack today...

External Sender. Be aware of links, attachments and requests.

Peter and colleagues,

As you know, I try to always communicate on gmail because my NIH email is FOIA'd constantly.

Yesterday my gmail was hacked, probably by these GoF assholes, and until IT can get it fixed I may have to occasionally email from my NIH account.

It spent a couple hours today but couldn't fix it.

Stuff sent to my gmail gets to my phone, but not my NIH computer.

Don't worry, just send to any of my addresses and I will delete anything I don't want to see in the New York Times.

d

David M. Morens, MD

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [@gmail.com](#)
[REDACTED] (work)
[REDACTED] (cell)

IMPORTANT: My gmail frequently sends incoming messages to Trash, which is apparently not correctable. If you don't hear from me in a reasonable time, please try again, call, or use my NIH email address

IMPORTANT: For US Government-related email, please also reply to my NIAID address

On Thu, Sep 9, 2021 at 5:10 PM Peter Daszak <[REDACTED]> wrote:

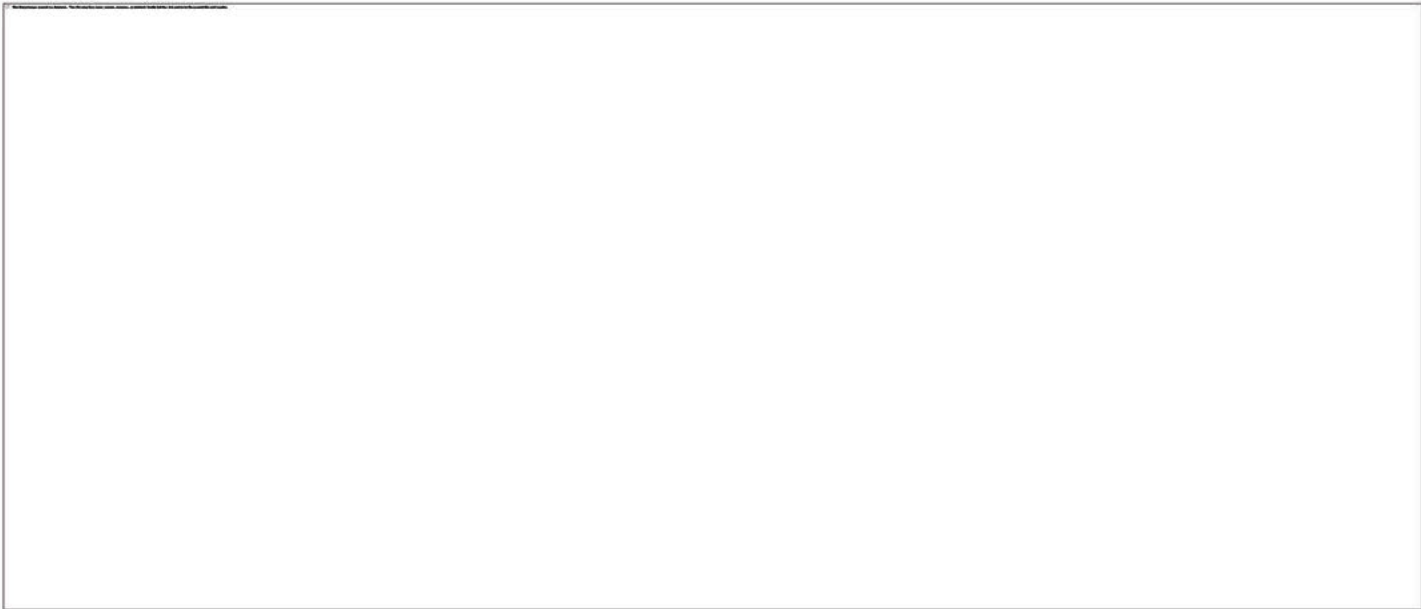
Here's a report in the Daily Caller that goes after the GoF argument that the chimeric bat viruses yielded more virus in humanized mice than the parental bat virus strain. <https://dailycaller.com/2021/09/09/ecohealth-alliance-gain-of-function-higher-viral-load-anthony-fauci/>

There's a good response from NIH: 'An NIH spokesperson told the DCF the agency "never approved any research that would make a coronavirus more dangerous to humans." "The research we supported in China, where coronaviruses are prevalent, sought to understand the behavior of coronaviruses circulating in bats that have the potential to cause widespread disease," the spokesperson said. "The body of science produced by this research demonstrates that the bat coronavirus sequences published from that work NIH supported were not SARS-CoV-2. More importantly, because of similar research to understand coronaviruses, we were able to move swiftly to develop vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 and save lives."

This story is particularly irritating because if you look at the P3CO rules, it's clear they are meant for pathogens that occur in humans and might be made more dangerous. These were bat viruses that have never been shown to occur in humans. Let's also not forget that the virus with a higher viral load in mice was actually because it had the spike protein of a bat virus being flown around every night by tens of thousands of bats in rural china – not something new created by us to enhance virulence - In fact, the opposite: the fact that we could do this work with a chimera means that we don't have to isolate and culture every single new bat cov we find. It reduces risk!

INVESTIGATIVE GROUP

Fauci-Funded Wuhan Lab Viruses Exhibited Over 10,000 Times Higher Viral Load Than Natural Strain, Documents Show



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-
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[ANDREW KERR](#) INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

September 09, 2021 3:25 PM ET

- **U.S. and Chinese researchers funded by the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases created viruses in a Wuhan lab that exhibited over 10,000 times higher viral load in humanized mice, records released by the agency show.**
- **Rutgers University professor Richard Ebright said the data was a “bona fide bombshell” that proves the NIAID, under Dr. Anthony Fauci’s leadership, violated federal policies, endangered the public and lied to the public.**
- **Fauci testified before the Senate in June that his agency never funded gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.**

U.S. and Chinese researchers funded by Dr. Anthony Fauci’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) created viruses in a Wuhan lab that exhibited over 10,000 times higher viral load in humanized mice than the natural virus they were based on, according to an infectious disease professor citing documents recently released by the agency.

The U.S. nonprofit group EcoHealth Alliance notified the NIAID in two reports that between June 2017 and May 2018 it had created three lab-generated chimeric SARS-related coronaviruses in China that exhibited “significantly higher” viral loads, [documents](#) first reported by The Intercept show, but the agency continued to fund the project with taxpayer dollars without flagging it for review by an independent federal committee created in late 2017 to oversee gain-of-function research.

Rutgers University professor Richard Ebright, a vocal opponent of gain-of-function research, [said](#) the data was a “bona fide bombshell” that proves the NIAID, under Fauci’s leadership, violated federal policies, endangered the public and lied to the public.

“Three EcoHealth/[Wuhan Institute of Virology] lab-generated viruses exhibited >10x to >10,000x higher viral load than the starting bat virus in humanized mice,” Ebright tweeted. “One EcoHealth/WIV lab-generated virus exhibited higher pathogenicity than the starting bat virus in infection studies with humanized mice.”

“The results demonstrate—unequivocally—a gain in function,” he said.

In comparison, the viral load for people infected with the delta variant is roughly 1,000 times higher than those infected with the original strain of the virus, according to [Nature](#) science journal.

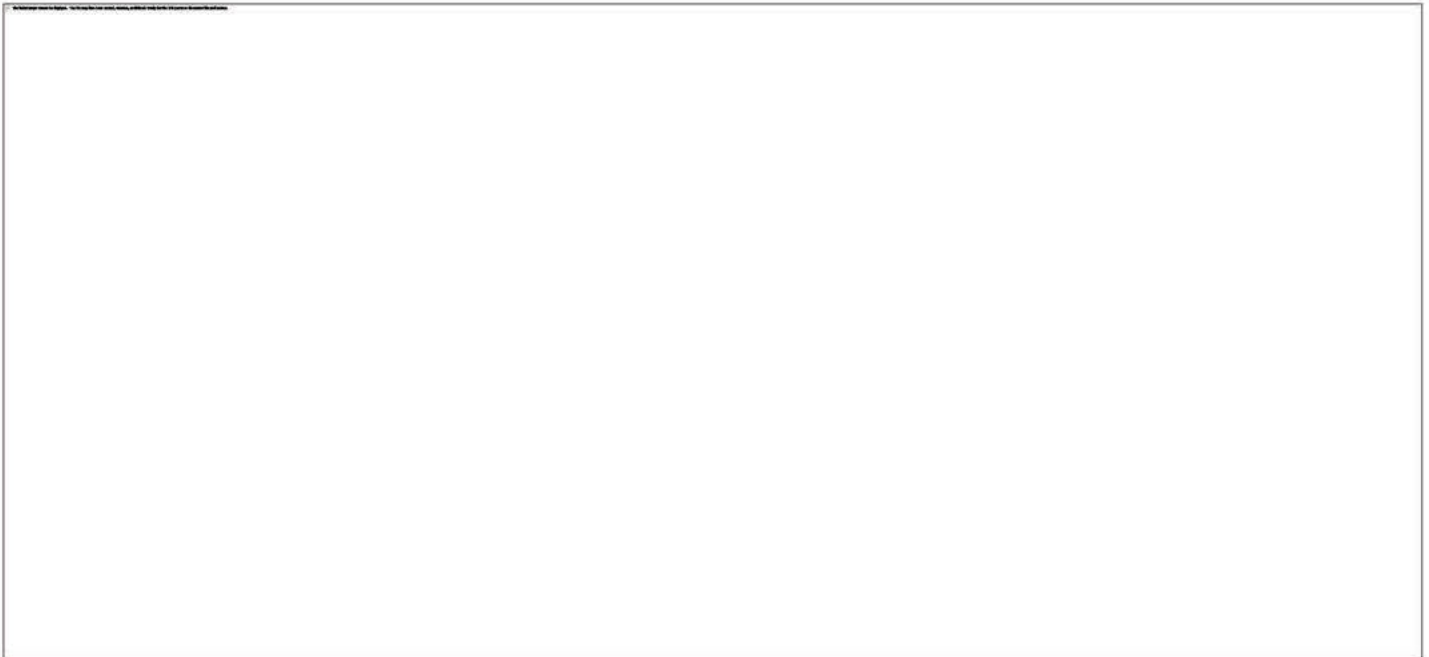
Ebright [added](#) on Twitter that the gain-of-function research activity that NIAID allowed EcoHealth Alliance to conduct in China could have yielded the virus that causes COVID-19 or a progenitor of that virus.

EcoHealth Alliance first notified the NIAID it created the three lab-generated SARS-related coronaviruses in a progress report detailing its research activities between June 2017 and May 2018.

“Using the reverse genetic methods we previously developed, infectious clones with the WIV1 backbone and the spike protein of SHC014, WIV16 and Rs4231, respectively, were constructed and recombinant viruses were successfully rescued,” the group said in its progress report. “2 and 4 days post infection, the viral load in lung tissues of mice challenged with rWIV1-SHC014S, rWIV1-WIV16S and rWIV1-Rs4231S ... were significantly higher than that in rWIV1-infected mice.”

“These results demonstrate varying pathogenicity of SARSr-CoVs with different spike proteins in humanized mice,” the report added.

EcoHealth Alliance included a chart visualizing the increased viral load of their lab-created viruses. The chart is presented in a Log scale, meaning each tick of the chart represents a 100-fold increase in viral load in mice with humanized cells, Ebright explained to the Daily Caller News Foundation.



Charts submitted by EcoHealth Alliance to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases showing loss of body weight (right) and viral load (left) of mice with humanized cells infected with the natural WIV1 viral strain and three EcoHealth lab-created virus strains. The viral load chart is presented in Log scale, meaning each tick of the graph represents a 100-fold increase in viral load, Rutgers University professor Richard Ebright explained to the DCNF. (Screenshot)

“Each tick in the chart on the right represents an increment of 100x,” Ebright told the DCNF. “The day 4 data show greater-than-10,000x higher viral loads for the lab-generated viruses.”

The viral load for humanized mice infected with the natural virus caught up with the lab-created strains by the end of the experiment, the chart shows, but Ebright said that viral loads in the early stages of an infection are important figures to consider when assessing a pathogen’s transmissibility.

“In terms of assessing potential for transmissibility, the viral load at all time points, particularly at early time points, is relevant. (See Delta variant),” Ebright told the DCNF.

EcoHealth Alliance provided another chart in its progress report showing that humanized mice infected with EcoHealth’s lab-created viruses lost more bodyweight than humanized mice infected with the natural WIV1 strain.

EcoHealth Alliance included the same two charts in a 2018 request to the NIAID requesting additional funding for its research in China, the document trove released by [The Intercept](#) shows.

Federal funding for gain-of-function experiments that increase the transmissibility or pathogenicity of potential pandemic pathogens was temporarily suspended in 2014 due to widespread scientific concerns it risked leaking supercharged viruses into the human population.

Funding for gain-of-function research was resumed in late 2017, but only for projects that went through the new [Potential Pandemic Pathogens Control and Oversight](#) (P3CO) Framework, which includes a review by an HHS review board tasked with critically evaluating whether grants that involve enhancing dangerous pathogens, such as coronaviruses, are worth the risks and that proper safeguards are in place.

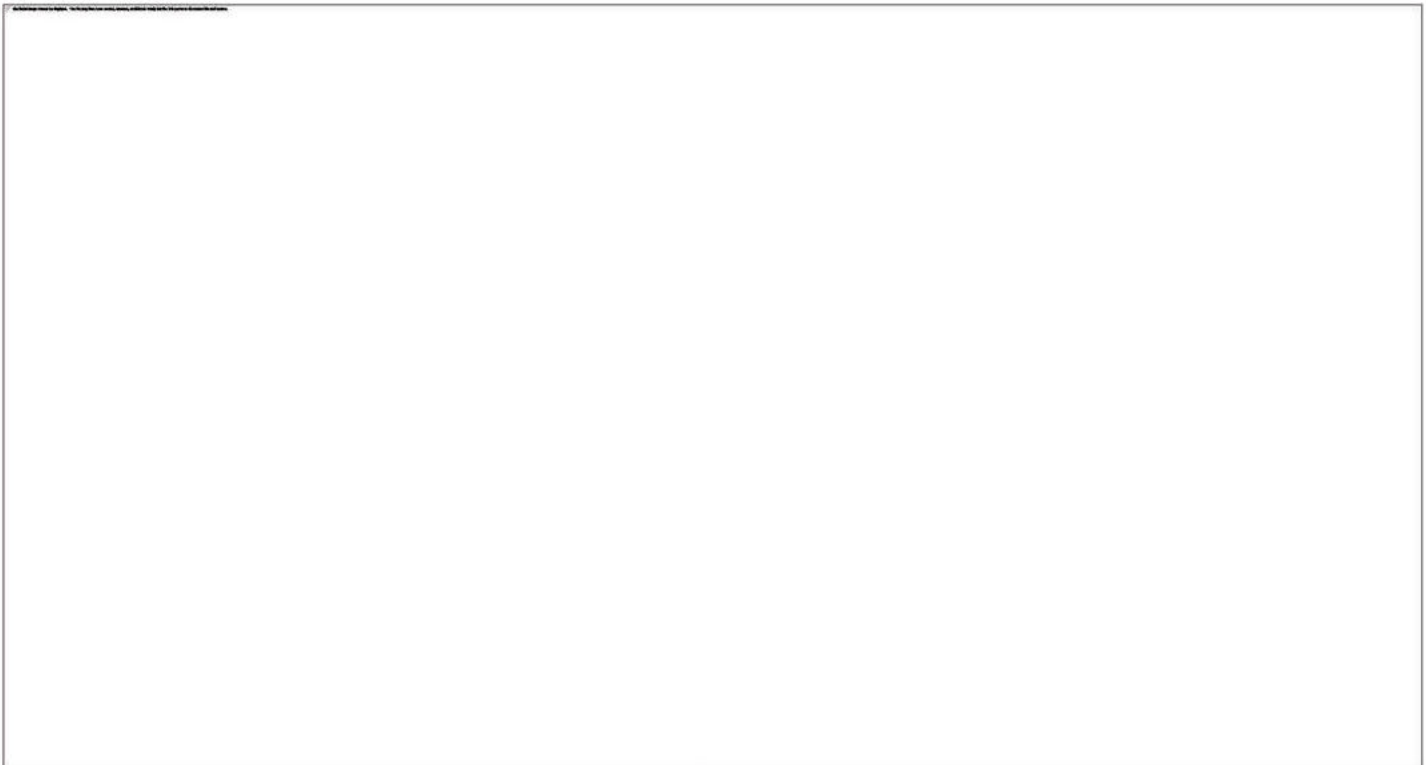
The NIAID opted not to flag the EcoHealth Alliance grant for P3CO after determining on its own accord that the project “did not involve the enhancement of the pathogenicity or transmissibility of the viruses studied,” a National Institutes of Health spokesperson previously told the DCF. [\(RELATED: US Grant To Wuhan Lab To Enhance Bat-Based Coronaviruses Was Never Scrutinized By HHS Review Board, NIH Says\)](#)

Fauci said during a [congressional hearing](#) in May that the NIH and NIAID “categorically has not funded gain-of-function research to be conducted at the Wuhan Institute of Virology,” a claim that led Republican Sen. [Rand Paul](#) of Kentucky in July to send a criminal referral to the Department of Justice to investigate whether Fauci lied before Congress.

The P3CO framework [defines](#) an “enhanced” potential pandemic pathogen as any lab-created virus that exhibits any level of boosted transmissibility and/or virulence. Funding agencies such as the NIAID are required to flag any research grant that is “reasonably anticipated to create, transfer, or use enhanced PPPs” for P3CO review.

Despite this, documents released by The Intercept suggest that the NIAID authorized EcoHealth Alliance to conduct gain-of-function experiments on bat coronaviruses up to a certain threshold.

The NIAID informed EcoHealth Alliance in a June 2018 award notice that it must notify the agency only if it creates a virus “with enhanced growth by more than [10 times] compared to wild type strains,” according to documents released by The Intercept. The NIAID linked to the P3CO review process, which contains no such mention of a 10 times allowance, in the very next sentence, the document shows.



NIAID notice to EcoHealth Alliance in June 2018 saying it must notify the agency only if it produces a lab virus that exhibits more than 10 times enhancement over wild-type strains. (Screenshot)

An NIH spokesperson told the DCF the agency “never approved any research that would make a coronavirus more dangerous to humans.”

“The research we supported in China, where coronaviruses are prevalent, sought to understand the behavior of coronaviruses circulating in bats that have the potential to cause widespread disease,” the spokesperson said. “The body of science produced by this research demonstrates that the bat coronavirus sequences published from that work NIH supported were not SARS-CoV-2. More importantly, because of similar research to understand coronaviruses, we were able to move swiftly to develop vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 and save lives.”

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Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance
520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200
New York, NY 10018-6507
USA

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation

From: Peter Daszak [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 8:29 PM
To: 'Garry, Robert F' [REDACTED]; 'Kristian G. Andersen' [REDACTED]
Cc: 'David Morens' [REDACTED]; 'Edward Holmes' [REDACTED]; 'Jason Gale'

'Rasmussen, Angie' [REDACTED]; Robert Kessler

'Stephen Goldstein' [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

That's interesting about Jesse Bloom – I wasn't aware of that work and hadn't really heard of him before this year to be honest. I suspect that like many people his view of his own research is that it's highly professionally managed and carefully controlled re. biosafety. He clearly has a different view of the work at WIV & by other leading Chinese scientists and seems suspicious of their motives in many of his public comments. This can't be based on their published work – it's often excellent. It just seems like a difficulty people have teasing apart their viewpoint about the Chinese Govt from their opinion about individual scientists. Anyone who's been on the ground in China rapidly realizes that the two are not the same.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance
520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200
New York, NY 10018-6507
USA

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation

From: Garry, Robert F <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 4:12 PM

To: Peter Daszak <[REDACTED]> Kristian G. Andersen <[REDACTED]>

Cc: David Morens <[REDACTED]> Edward Holmes <[REDACTED]> Jason Gale

<[REDACTED]> Rasmussen, Angie <[REDACTED]> Robert Kessler

<[REDACTED]> Stephen Goldstein <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Re: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

Sorry this is happening. The anti-science attacks are just getting more and more extreme.

Unfortunately, there exists a small vocal group of scientists that see virtually every experiment done by virologists as risky and potentially GoF. Many of those ppl are quoted in the Intercept article.

WRT Jesse Bloom it is rather ironic I must say. One need not look too hard at his influenza virus publications to identify quite a number that could be considered "risky" at least by a Relman/Ebright definition. Selecting drug resistant influenza virus mutants, and creating influenza virus SARS-CoV-2 recombinants to name two. Just saying...

From: Peter Daszak [REDACTED]
Date: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 2:49 PM
To: Kristian Andersen [REDACTED]
Cc: David Morens [REDACTED], Robert Garry [REDACTED], Edward Holmes [REDACTED], Jason Gale [REDACTED], "Rasmussen, Angie" [REDACTED], Robert Kessler <[REDACTED]>, Stephen Goldstein [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

External Sender. Be aware of links, attachments and requests.

Great to see your email Kristian – right on every point. The isolate vs. sequence vs. sample misnomer is something that really has plagued me with this stuff – Zhengli's group repeatedly used 'isolate' for 'sample' on Genbank and I've made that mistake here also.

Re. the MERS work, you're dead right – we proposed it, explained that it would likely need review by the P3CO committee equivalent, and then pushed it to Yr4. In the end we didn't do this work – there was already a ton of other more interesting work directly on SARSr-CoVs to do.

The latest line of attack that will be coming out in a follow-up article in the *Intercept* tonight is that in the Y4 report, we show one of the chimeras having more than a log virus output than the parent strain (WIV-1). The NoA was updated in Y3 to say that if this happened we had to report to NIH and cease expts. Ironically, the way *Intercept* found this out is because they now have a copy of our "report to NIH" in which we show this, but of course that's not going to stop them saying we broke the rules on GoF.

The other line of attack is the one Jesse Bloom's pursuing – that we didn't publish sequence data within 6 months of the "final version being received" as per our proposal. Jesse sneakily suggested this in an email to me last night in which he asked for the sequences so he can do SARS-CoV-2 origin analyses, while at the same time tweeting an accusation that we broke the rules in a chain with Alina Chan and the "Seeker". I'm not sure whether to respond at all, but I might just let him know that all SARSr-CoV sequences we had are already published in our 2020 paper in Nat. Comm. Again – the problem with these accusations is that just being accused of this by the press causes us seven levels of hell, and arguing back is even worse.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance
520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200
New York, NY 10018-6507
USA

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation

From: Kristian G. Andersen <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 10:30 PM

To: Peter Daszak <[REDACTED]>

Cc: David Morens <[REDACTED]>; Garry, Robert F. <[REDACTED]>; Edward Holmes

<[REDACTED]>; Jason Gale <[REDACTED]>; Rasmussen, Angie

<[REDACTED]>; Robert Kessler <[REDACTED]>; Stephen Goldstein

<[REDACTED]>

Subject: Re: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

It's harassment, plain and simple - it has absolutely nothing to do with trying to find the truth of how SARS-CoV-2 emerged in the human population.

The way I see it though, we now have (a) the entire US IC having completed their investigation, (b) unredacted grants and annual reports from EcoHealth, and (c) old theses from the WIV.

This is *exactly* the type of information that Ebright, Metzl, Relman, Bloom, Chan, and the rest of the lot have been requesting. Now this work has been completed, what was unearthed? Nothing. Nada. Zilch. No evidence of the virus (or sequence) at the WIV (or anywhere else) prior to the pandemic. No gain-of-function work (despite what Ebright says). The same cloning system used again and again (WIV1). Vero cells used for virus isolation (SARS-CoV-2 loses the FCS in those cells), and no previously unreported viruses isolated (although I

note the repeated use of "isolates" in one of the annual reports to describe 11 samples - I myself have made that mistake before). So again, there's nothing.

This absence of evidence is *in fact* evidence of absence in this particular case - there would have been *some* evidence for SARS-CoV-2 in *some* of these documents had it been at the WIV. Yet, nothing.

As for GOF work, again nothing. I note the mention of work with recombinant MERS in the year 3 report for work proposed in year 4 - depending on the nature of work, that could be considered GOF/DURC. However, when reading the year 4 report, I don't see any of that work mentioned - just work with pseudotyped viruses, which is clearly not GOF (or DURC).

Of course, people will take stuff out of context to make *anything* fit a particular narrative. However, there's an expiration date on bullshit and I suspect we're well past due.

K

On Tue, Sep 7, 2021 at 6:28 PM Peter Daszak <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Here's one of the "journalists" who got the "Scoop". Basically they just FoIA'd NIH, then sued when NIH refused to release, then dumped the documents online and asked for "people with relevant expertise to get in touch". Cue Drs. Ebright, Relman, Chan, Bloom and others to start their attempt at a character assassination...

[Mara Hvistendahl](#)

[@MaraHvistendahl](#)

.

[15h](#)

NEW: We obtained hundreds of pages from NIH detailing EcoHealth Alliance's work with the Wuhan Institute of Virology. We are publishing them in full. With

[@fastlerner](#) and [@theintercept](#) legal team, which filed a FOIA lawsuit for the documents' release

[New Details Emerge About Coronavirus Research at Chinese Lab](#)

[More than 900 pages of materials related to US.-funded coronavirus research in China were released following a FOIA lawsuit by The Intercept.](#)

theintercept.com



[Mara Hvistendahl](#)

[@MaraHvistendahl](#)

[15h](#) The full documents are here: "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence"

<https://documentcloud.org/documents/21055989-understanding-risk-bat-coronavirus-emergence-grant-notice...>

"Understanding Risk of Zoonotic Virus Emergence in Emerging Infectious Disease Hotspots of Southeast Asia"

<https://documentcloud.org/documents/21055988-risk-zoonotic-virus-hotspots-grant-notice...>



Mara Hvistendahl

@MaraHvistendahl

7h

There is a lot here. [@fastlerner](#) and I are interested in hearing feedback from people with relevant expertise.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance

520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200

New York, NY 10018-6507

USA

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](#)

EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation

From: David Morens [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 9:07 PM
To: Peter Daszak <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Garry, Robert F. [REDACTED]; Kristian G. Andersen [REDACTED]; Edward Holmes [REDACTED]; Jason Gale [REDACTED]; Robert Kessler [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

Do not rule out suing these assholes for slander. d

Sent from my iPhone

David M Morens

OD, NIAID, NIH

On Sep 7, 2021, at 20:39, Peter Daszak <[REDACTED]> wrote:

To be honest, this whole process is beyond a joke. We're spending a huge amount of staff time dealing with the BS from these FOIA requests even though the grant's been terminated, suspended and funds are still unavailable.

The lab leakers are already stirring up bullshit lines of attack that will bring more negative publicity our way – which is what this is about – a way to line up the GoF attack on Fauci, or the 'risky research' attack on all of us.

Jesse Bloom's now trying to claim we weren't following our proposed rules for data release (not true – all SARSr-CoV RdRp sequences on Genbank in summer 2020, despite the grant being terminated) – he's tagging Alina Chan and 'The Seeker' on Twitter. Ebright's trying to claim we were working on MERS as a 'shadow' line of work. There'll be more to come – just a free-for-all effort to find a few sentences that they can take out of context.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance

520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200

New York, NY 10018-6507

USA

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation

From: Garry, Robert F [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 8:08 PM
To: Kristian G. Andersen [REDACTED]; Edward Holmes [REDACTED]
Cc: Jason Gale [REDACTED]; [angela.rasmussen](mailto:angela.rasmussen@ecoa.org) [REDACTED]; [daszak](mailto:daszak@ecohealthalliance.org) [REDACTED];
[dmorens](mailto:dmorens@ecoa.org) [REDACTED]; [kessler](mailto:kessler@ecoa.org) [REDACTED]; [u6025689](mailto:u6025689@ecoa.org) [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

Totally - that the real story of the FOIAed grants - no SC2 or anything close that could have been converted to it.

Metzl, Chan and others wanted a "forensic investigation." The grants that they thought would be private and written before the pandemic do not mention a new SARS-like virus. YOU can be sure that a new virus 76% similar to SC1 would have been front and center in the applications and progress reports.

My guess this is part of the info the IC used to conclude no bioweapon, likely no engineering - NO SC2 before the pandemic. This Gof debate now very clearly has nothing to do with the origin of SC2.

<

Message

From: Edward Holmes
[REDACTED]

Sent: 9/10/2021 12:20:16 AM

To: Jason Gale
[REDACTED]

CC: Peter Daszak
[REDACTED]
dmmorens [REDACTED]
kga1978 [REDACTED]
angela.rasmussen [REDACTED]
kessler [REDACTED]
Garry, Robert F [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
u6025689 [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Intercept piece is now out.

External Sender. Be aware of links, attachments and requests.

It is just so tedious and so bloody stupid.

Other than the abuse, the worst thing is every day that goes by, and the more shit that is thrown, the less likely we are of finding out what really happened.

PROFESSOR EDWARD C. HOLMES FAA FRS
ARC Australian Laureate Fellow

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY
Marie Bashir Institute for Infectious Diseases & Biosecurity,
School of Life & Environmental Sciences and School of Medical Sciences,
The University of Sydney | Sydney | NSW | 2006 | Australia
T [REDACTED]
E [REDACTED]

On 10 Sep 2021, at 3:17 pm, Jason Gale (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) [REDACTED] wrote:

Well done, Angie, for being a voice of reason. I'm sorry my profession seems intent on piling on you, David. Personally, I find this whole line of inquiry incredibly boring. Hope you're able to switch off soon and get some rest. Jason

From: [daszak](#) [REDACTED] At: 09/10/21 15:09:54 UTC+10:00
To: [kga1978](#) [REDACTED], [dmmorens](#) [REDACTED]
Cc: Jason Gale (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) , [angela.rasmussen](#) [REDACTED]
[rfgarry](#) [REDACTED], [edward.holmes](#) [REDACTED]
[kessler](#) [REDACTED], [u6025689](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: Intercept piece is now out.

Really appreciate you speaking out Angie. I just read the piece in the Intercept and it's very upsetting: <https://theintercept.com/2021/09/09/covid-origins-gain-of-function-research/>

What you said is correct – without evidence of ability to infect people, or transmit even from one animal to another, it can't possibly meet the NIH definition of GoF, which is now officially the P3CO definition as follows (from <https://www.phe.gov/s3/dualuse/Documents/P3CO.pdf>):

Section II. Scope and Definitions For the purposes of this HHS P3CO Framework:

A. A potential pandemic pathogen (PPP) is a pathogen that satisfies both of the following:

1. It is likely highly transmissible and likely capable of wide and uncontrollable spread in human populations; and
2. It is likely highly virulent and likely to cause significant morbidity and/or mortality in humans.

B. An enhanced PPP is defined as a PPP resulting from the enhancement of the transmissibility and/or virulence of a pathogen. Enhanced PPPs do not include naturally occurring pathogens that are circulating in or have been recovered from nature, regardless of their pandemic potential

How on any planet is a bat-CoV that's never been seen in people, "likely highly transmissible and likely capable of wide and uncontrollable spread in human populations"? It seems the 8 scientists that believed this to be GoF base it on one of the chimeras growing faster than the parental strain early on, while forgetting that 1) these are bat viruses have never been shown to infect people, or that, as you say Angie – the growth rates of the parental strain caught up with it by the end of the expt. I'm v. disappointed that Vincent Racaniello is one of these scientists – he should know better.

I'm hoping that more will speak out and point to the differences between their version of what GoF is, and the actual definition that we're all supposed to adhere to, and by the way that NIH uses as the agency of note to decide!

NIH DOCUMENTS PROVIDE NEW EVIDENCE U.S. FUNDED GAIN-OF-FUNCTION RESEARCH IN WUHAN

U.S.-funded experiments in China posed biosafety risks but did not cause Covid-19 pandemic, scientists say.

[<Mail Attachment.jpeg><Mail Attachment.jpeg><Mail Attachment.jpeg>](#)

[Sharon Lerner](#), [Mara Hvistendahl](#), [Maia Hibbett](#)

September 9 2021, 9:03 p.m.

DOCUMENTS OBTAINED BY The Intercept contain new evidence that the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the nearby Wuhan University Center for Animal Experiment, along with their collaborator, the U.S.-based nonprofit EcoHealth Alliance, have engaged in what the U.S. government defines as “gain-of-function research of concern,” intentionally making viruses more pathogenic or transmissible in order to study them, despite stipulations from a U.S. funding agency that the money not be used for that purpose.

Grant money for the controversial experiment came from the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which is headed by Anthony Fauci. The award to EcoHealth Alliance, a research organization which studies the spread of viruses from animals to humans, included subawards to Wuhan Institute of Virology and East China Normal University. The principal investigator on the grant is EcoHealth Alliance President Peter Daszak, who has been a key voice in the search for Covid-19’s origins.

Scientists unanimously told The Intercept that the experiment, which involved infecting genetically engineered mice with “chimeric” hybrid viruses, could not have directly sparked the pandemic. None of the viruses listed in the write-ups of the experiment are related to the virus that causes Covid-19, SARS-CoV-2, closely enough to have evolved into it. Still, several scientists said the new information, which the NIH released after it was [sued by The Intercept](#), points to biosafety concerns, highlighting a general lack of oversight for research on pathogens and raising questions about what other information has not been publicly disclosed.

“As a virologist, I personally think creating chimeras of SARS-related bat coronaviruses that are thought to pose high risk to humans entails unacceptable risks,” said Jesse Bloom, who studies the evolution of viruses at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS, is a disease caused, like Covid-19, by an airborne coronavirus.

<Mail Attachment.jpeg>

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci listens during a briefing on the coronavirus pandemic at the White House on March 26, 2020 in Washington, DC.

Photo: Drew Angerer/Getty Images

The experiment also raises questions about assertions from Fauci and NIH Director Francis Collins that NIH-funded projects at the Wuhan Institute of Virology did not involve gain-of-function research. In May, Fauci [testified](#) before Congress: “The NIH has not ever and does not now fund gain-of-function

research in the Wuhan Institute of Virology.” The documents do not establish whether Fauci was directly aware of the work.

Scientists working under a 2014 NIH grant to the EcoHealth Alliance to study bat coronaviruses combined the genetic material from a “parent” coronavirus known as WIV1 with other viruses. They twice submitted summaries of their work that showed that, when in the lungs of genetically engineered mice, three altered bat coronaviruses at times reproduced far more quickly than the original virus on which they were based. The altered viruses were also somewhat more pathogenic, with one causing the mice to lose significant weight. The researchers reported, “These results demonstrate varying pathogenicity of SARSr-CoVs with different spike proteins in humanized mice.”

But the terms of the grant clearly stipulated that the funding could not be used for gain-of-function experiments. The grant conditions also required the researchers to immediately report potentially dangerous results and stop their experiments pending further NIH review. According to both the EcoHealth Alliance and NIH, the results were reported to the agency, but NIH determined that rules designed to restrict gain-of-function research did not apply.

The Intercept consulted 11 scientists who are virologists or work in adjacent fields and hold a range of views on both the ethics of gain-of-function research and the Covid-19 origins search. Seven said that the work appears to meet NIH’s criteria for gain-of-function research.

One said that the experiment “absolutely does not meet the bar” for gain-of-function research. “You can’t predict that these viruses would be more pathogenic, or even pathogenic at all in people,” said Angela Rasmussen, a virologist with the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization at the University of Saskatchewan. “They also did not study transmissibility at all in these experiments,” meaning that the scientists did not look at whether the viruses could spread across a population.

Three experts said that, while they did not have enough knowledge of U.S. policies to comment on whether the research met NIH criteria, the experiment involving humanized mice was unnecessarily risky.

One virologist, Vincent Racaniello, a professor of microbiology and immunology at Columbia University, said while he considered the mouse experiment described in the document to clearly fall into the gain-of-function category, he didn’t see it as problematic. “You can do some kinds of gain-of-function research that then has unforeseen consequences and may be a problem, but that’s not the case here,” said Racaniello.

Robert Kessler, communications manager for EcoHealth Alliance, denied that the work on the humanized mice met the definition of gain-of-function research. Kessler insisted that bat viruses are not potential pandemic pathogens because, he said, “a bat virus is not known to be able to infect humans.” The proposal justified the work on WIV1 by explaining that it is “not a select agent” — referring to a [list](#) of closely monitored toxins and biological agents that have the potential to pose a severe threat to public health — and “has not been shown to cause human infections, and has not been shown to be transmissible between humans.”

But the group’s bat coronavirus research was focused on the very threat that bat viruses pose to people. Kessler did acknowledge that, while the original bat coronavirus in the experiment did not spread among humans, the research was designed to gauge how bat coronaviruses could evolve to infect humans.

All but two of the scientists consulted agreed that, whatever title it is given, the newly public experiment raised serious concerns about the safety and oversight of federally funded research. “In my point of view, the debate about the definition of ‘gain-of-function’ has been too much focused on technical aspects,” said Jacques van Helden, a professor of bioinformatics at Aix-Marseille Université. “The real question is whether or not research has the potential to create or facilitate the selection of viruses that might infect humans.” The experiments described in the proposal clearly do have that potential, he said.

NIH spokesperson Elizabeth Deatrick said that the agency had considered the research — and decided not to restrict it under its own rules. “In 2016, NIAID determined that the work was not subject to the Gain-of-Function (GoF) research funding pause and the subsequent HHS P3CO Framework,” Deatrick wrote, referring to [criteria](#) put in place in 2017 to guide the agency’s funding decisions about research that involves, or is reasonably anticipated to involve, potential pandemic pathogens.

Republican members of Congress have alleged, without sufficient evidence, that gain-of-function research in Wuhan sparked the coronavirus pandemic. As part of an inquiry into the origins of the pandemic, they have twice grilled Fauci in Congress on his role as NIAID director.

In a [heated exchange in July](#), Republican Sen. Rand Paul accused Fauci of lying when he claimed that NIH did not fund gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

Experts now say that the documents support the contention that NIH funded gain-of-function work, though not in the specific instance where Paul alleged it. “There’s no question,” said Racaniello, of Columbia University, who pointed to

the decreased weight of the mice infected with the chimeric viruses that was described in the research summaries sent to NIH. “From the weight loss, it’s gain of function. Tony Fauci is wrong saying it’s not.”

But the documents do not prove Paul’s claim that Fauci was lying, as they do not make clear whether Fauci read them. Nor do they in any way support Paul’s allegation that Fauci was “responsible for 4 million people around the world dying of a pandemic” — or that anyone intentionally caused Covid-19. What is clear is that program officers at NIAID, the agency that Fauci oversees, did know about the research.

A paragraph describing the research, as well as two figures illustrating its results, were included in both a 2018 progress report on the bat coronavirus grant and an application for its 2019 renewal. And NIH confirmed that it reviewed them.

“NIH has never approved any research that would make a coronavirus more dangerous to humans,” the agency said in a statement, echoing [remarks](#) by Collins, the NIH director, posted to its website in May. “The research we supported in China, where coronaviruses are prevalent, sought to understand the behavior of coronaviruses circulating in bats that have the potential to cause widespread disease.” Similar research funded by NIH had aided in the development of vaccines against the coronavirus, the statement continued.

The White House did not respond to questions about the research.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance
520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200
New York, NY 10018-6507
USA

Tel.: 

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation

From: Kristian G. Andersen [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 8:13 PM
To: David Morens [REDACTED]
Cc: Rasmussen, Angie [REDACTED]; Peter Daszak [REDACTED]; Garry, Robert F [REDACTED]; Edward Holmes [REDACTED]; Jason Gale [REDACTED]; Robert Kessler [REDACTED]; Stephen Goldstein [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: here's the latest line of attack today...

"she's talked to 10 virologists or "people in adjacent fields" for her follow-up".

If she had in fact done that, she'd realize there'd be no news and no need for a second article - except to say "nothing to see here, move along".

Sigh.

On Thu, Sep 9, 2021 at 4:28 PM David Morens [REDACTED] wrote:

Amen and good for you! You are right that Ebright and his ilk are not only NOT experts but are harmful demagogues. They need to be called out. Because i am in government i can only fo this off the record, but i have done do again and again. Some of them are knowingly promoting false equivalences. If they interviewed a Holocaust survivor, they would say they have to give equal time and space to a Nazi murderer. They have no shame. d

Sent from my iPhone

David M Morens

OD, NIAID, NIH

On Sep 9, 2021, at 18:40, Rasmussen, Angie [REDACTED] wrote:

Peter and all,

I am so sorry you are still going through all of this. For what it's worth, I broke my rule of talking to disingenuous journalists and sent Mara Hvistendahl a long email telling her exactly what I think of the "experts" she's talked to and setting the record straight about what these FOIA reports supposedly show. From what I can see, they show that you were reporting your work appropriately to NIH as required, the work itself was done in appropriate biocontainment, and, importantly, you didn't have SARS-CoV-2 or a progenitor. I also explained that previous work was published with WIV1 chimeras and that this type of study precludes doing more dangerous (and technically very difficult) virus isolation.

She wanted to know whether I agreed with her two sources (likely Alina Chan or Richard Ebright, based on her prior story) that this fits the definition of GoF by NIH and I told her no and explained at length why not and the assertions that it was should disqualify any supposed “expert”. Took every opportunity to dunk on their amateurish, disingenuous bullshit, while also emphasizing the importance of this work. Mara wrote back defensively, claiming she’s talked to 10 virologists or “people in adjacent fields” for her follow-up. I am not optimistic that the follow-up will be more balanced, but I did try to provide some juicy quotes about how her “experts” actually have no expertise, and emphasized the profound damage these people have done to this essential research. They make all of us less safe.

Hang in there. Ultimately the truth will come out and it’s not going to be from the likes of the Daily Caller’s inability to interpret virology data or from Jesse Bloom and all the grifters and conspiracy theorists populating the rabbit hole that he’s crawled down.

Angela L. Rasmussen, Ph.D.
Research Scientist
Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO)
University of Saskatchewan
Office: [REDACTED]
She/her
www.vido.org

<Mail Attachment.png>

On Sep 9, 2021, at 3:07 PM, Peter Daszak [REDACTED] wrote:

CAUTION: External to USask. Verify sender and use caution with links and attachments. Forward suspicious emails to phishing@usask.ca

Here’s a report in the Daily Caller that goes after the GoF argument that the chimeric bat viruses yielded more virus in humanized mice than the parental bat virus strain. <https://dailycaller.com/2021/09/09/ecohealth-alliance-gain-of-function-higher-viral-load-anthony-fauci/>

There’s a good response from NIH: ‘An NIH spokesperson told the DCNF the agency “never approved any research that would make a coronavirus more dangerous to humans.” “The research we supported in China, where coronaviruses are prevalent, sought to understand the behavior of coronaviruses circulating in bats that have the potential to cause widespread disease,” the spokesperson said. “The body of science produced by this research demonstrates that the bat coronavirus sequences published from that work NIH supported were not SARS-CoV-2. More importantly, because of similar research to understand coronaviruses, we were able to move swiftly to develop vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 and save lives.”’

This story is particularly irritating because if you look at the P3CO rules, it’s clear they are meant for pathogens that occur in humans and might be made more dangerous. These were bat viruses that have never been shown to occur in

humans. Let's also not forget that the virus with a higher viral load in mice was actually because it had the spike protein of a bat virus being flown around every night by tens of thousands of bats in rural china – not something new created by us to enhance virulence - In fact, the opposite: the fact that we could do this work with a chimera means that we don't have to isolate and culture every single new bat cov we find. It reduces risk!

INVESTIGATIVE GROUP

Fauci-Funded Wuhan Lab Viruses Exhibited Over 10,000 Times Higher Viral Load Than Natural Strain, Documents Show

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-

ANDREW KERR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER

September 09, 2021 3:25 PM ET

- **U.S. and Chinese researchers funded by the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases created viruses in a Wuhan lab that exhibited over 10,000 times higher viral load in humanized mice, records released by the agency show.**
- **Rutgers University professor Richard Ebright said the data was a “bona fide bombshell” that proves the NIAID, under Dr. Anthony Fauci’s leadership, violated federal policies, endangered the public and lied to the public.**
- **Fauci testified before the Senate in June that his agency never funded gain-of-function research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.**

U.S. and Chinese researchers funded by Dr. Anthony Fauci’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) created viruses in a Wuhan lab that exhibited over 10,000 times higher viral load in humanized mice than the natural virus they were based on, according to an infectious disease professor citing documents recently released by the agency.

The U.S. nonprofit group EcoHealth Alliance notified the NIAID in two reports that between June 2017 and May 2018 it had created three lab-generated chimeric SARS-related coronaviruses in China that exhibited “significantly higher” viral loads, [documents](#) first reported by The Intercept show, but the agency continued to fund the project with taxpayer dollars without flagging it for review by an independent federal committee created in late 2017 to oversee gain-of-function research.

Rutgers University professor Richard Ebright, a vocal opponent of gain-of-function research, [said](#) the data was a “bona fide bombshell” that proves the NIAID, under Fauci’s leadership, violated federal policies, endangered the public and lied to the public.

“Three EcoHealth/[Wuhan Institute of Virology] lab-generated viruses exhibited >10x to >10,000x higher viral load than the starting bat virus in humanized mice,” Ebright tweeted. “One EcoHealth/WIV lab-generated virus exhibited higher pathogenicity than the starting bat virus in infection studies with humanized mice.”

“The results demonstrate—unequivocally—a gain in function,” he said.

In comparison, the viral load for people infected with the delta variant is roughly 1,000 times higher than those infected with the original strain of the virus, according to [Nature](#) science journal.

Ebright [added](#) on Twitter that the gain-of-function research activity that NIAID allowed EcoHealth Alliance to conduct in China could have yielded the virus that causes COVID-19 or a progenitor of that virus.

EcoHealth Alliance first notified the NIAID it created the three lab-generated SARS-related coronaviruses in a progress report detailing its research activities between June 2017 and May 2018.

“Using the reverse genetic methods we previously developed, infectious clones with the WIV1 backbone and the spike protein of SHC014, WIV16 and Rs4231, respectively, were constructed and recombinant viruses were successfully rescued,” the group said in its progress report. “2 and 4 days post infection, the viral load in lung tissues of mice challenged with rWIV1-SHC014S, rWIV1-WIV16S and rWIV1-Rs4231S ... were significantly higher than that in rWIV1-infected mice.”

“These results demonstrate varying pathogenicity of SARSr-CoVs with different spike proteins in humanized mice,” the report added.

EcoHealth Alliance included a chart visualizing the increased viral load of their lab-created viruses. The chart is presented in a Log scale, meaning each tick of the chart represents a 100-fold increase in viral load in mice with humanized cells, Ebright explained to the Daily Caller News Foundation.

<image005.jpg>

Charts submitted by EcoHealth Alliance to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases showing loss of body weight (right) and viral load (left) of mice with humanized cells infected with the natural WIV1 viral strain and three EcoHealth lab-created virus strains. The viral load chart is presented in Log scale, meaning each tick of the graph represents a 100-fold increase in viral load, Rutgers University professor Richard Ebright explained to the DCFN. (Screenshot)

“Each tick in the chart on the right represents an increment of 100x,” Ebright told the DCFN. “The day 4 data show greater-than-10,000x higher viral loads for the lab-generated viruses.”

The viral load for humanized mice infected with the natural virus caught up with the lab-created strains by the end of the experiment, the chart shows, but Ebright said that viral loads in the early stages of an infection are important figures to consider when assessing a pathogen’s transmissibility.

“In terms of assessing potential for transmissibility, the viral load at all time points, particularly at early time points, is relevant. (See Delta variant),” Ebright told the DCFN.

EcoHealth Alliance provided another chart in its progress report showing that humanized mice infected with EcoHealth’s lab-created viruses lost more bodyweight than humanized mice infected with the natural WIV1 strain.

EcoHealth Alliance included the same two charts in a 2018 request to the NIAID requesting additional funding for its research in China, the document trove released by [The Intercept](#) shows.

Federal funding for gain-of-function experiments that increase the transmissibility or pathogenicity of potential pandemic pathogens was temporarily suspended in 2014 due to widespread scientific concerns it risked leaking supercharged viruses into the human population.

Funding for gain-of-function research was resumed in late 2017, but only for projects that went through the new [Potential Pandemic Pathogens Control and Oversight](#) (P3CO) Framework, which includes a review by an HHS review board tasked with critically evaluating whether grants that involve enhancing dangerous pathogens, such as coronaviruses, are worth the risks and that proper safeguards are in place.

The NIAID opted not to flag the EcoHealth Alliance grant for P3CO after determining on its own accord that the project “did not involve the enhancement of the pathogenicity or transmissibility of the viruses studied,” a National Institutes of Health spokesperson previously told the DCFN. [\(RELATED: US Grant To Wuhan Lab To Enhance Bat-Based Coronaviruses Was Never Scrutinized By HHS Review Board, NIH Says\)](#)

Fauci said during a [congressional hearing](#) in May that the NIH and NIAID “categorically has not funded gain-of-function research to be conducted at the Wuhan Institute of Virology,” a claim that led Republican Sen. [Rand Paul](#) of Kentucky in July to send a criminal referral to the Department of Justice to investigate whether Fauci lied before Congress.

The P3CO framework [defines](#) an “enhanced” potential pandemic pathogen as any lab-created virus that exhibits any level of boosted transmissibility and/or virulence. Funding agencies such as the NIAID are required to flag any research grant that is “reasonably anticipated to create, transfer, or use enhanced PPPs” for P3CO review.

Despite this, documents released by The Intercept suggest that the NIAID authorized EcoHealth Alliance to conduct gain-of-function experiments on bat coronaviruses up to a certain threshold.

The NIAID informed EcoHealth Alliance in a June 2018 award notice that it must notify the agency only if it creates a virus “with enhanced growth by more than [10 times] compared to wild type strains,” according to documents released by The Intercept. The NIAID linked to the P3CO review process, which contains no such mention of a 10 times allowance, in the very next sentence, the document shows.

<image006.jpg>

NIAID notice to EcoHealth Alliance in June 2018 saying it must notify the agency only if it produces a lab virus that exhibits more than 10 times enhancement over wild-type strains. (Screenshot)

An NIH spokesperson told the DCF the agency “never approved any research that would make a coronavirus more dangerous to humans.”

“The research we supported in China, where coronaviruses are prevalent, sought to understand the behavior of coronaviruses circulating in bats that have the potential to cause widespread disease,” the spokesperson said. “The body of science produced by this research demonstrates that the bat coronavirus sequences published from that work NIH supported were not SARS-CoV-2. More importantly, because of similar research to understand coronaviruses, we were able to move swiftly to develop vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 and save lives.”

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Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance
520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200
New York, NY 10018-6507
USA

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

From: Peter Daszak [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 8:29 PM
To: 'Garry, Robert F' [REDACTED] 'Kristian G. Andersen' [REDACTED]
Cc: 'David Morens' [REDACTED] 'Edward Holmes' [REDACTED] 'Jason Gale'
[REDACTED] 'Rasmussen, Angie' [REDACTED] Robert Kessler
[REDACTED] 'Stephen Goldstein' [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

That's interesting about Jesse Bloom – I wasn't aware of that work and hadn't really heard of him before this year to be honest. I suspect that like many people his view of his own research is that it's highly professionally managed and carefully controlled re. biosafety. He clearly has a different view of the work at WIV & by other leading Chinese scientists and seems suspicious of their motives in many of his public comments. This can't be based on their published work – it's often excellent. It just seems like a difficulty people have teasing apart their viewpoint about the Chinese Govt from their opinion about individual scientists. Anyone who's been on the ground in China rapidly realizes that the two are not the same.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance
520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200
New York, NY 10018-6507
USA

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

From: Garry, Robert F [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 4:12 PM
To: Peter Daszak [REDACTED]; Kristian G. Andersen [REDACTED]
Cc: David Morens [REDACTED]; Edward Holmes [REDACTED]; Jason Gale [REDACTED]; Rasmussen, Angie [REDACTED]; Robert Kessler [REDACTED]; Stephen Goldstein [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

Sorry this is happening. The anti-science attacks are just getting more and more extreme.

Unfortunately, there exists a small vocal group of scientists that see virtually every experiment done by virologists as risky and potentially GoF. Many of those ppl are quoted in the Intercept article.

WRT Jesse Bloom it is rather ironic I must say. One need not look too hard at his influenza virus publications to identify quite a number that could be considered "risky" at least by a Relman/Ebright definition. Selecting drug resistant influenza virus mutants, and creating influenza virus SARS-CoV-2 recombinants to name two. Just saying...

From: Peter Daszak [REDACTED]
Date: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 2:49 PM
To: Kristian Andersen [REDACTED]
Cc: David Morens [REDACTED]; Robert Garry [REDACTED]; Edward Holmes [REDACTED]; Jason Gale [REDACTED]; "Rasmussen, Angie" [REDACTED]; Robert Kessler [REDACTED]; Stephen Goldstein [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

External Sender. Be aware of links, attachments and requests.

Great to see your email Kristian – right on every point. The isolate vs. sequence vs. sample misnomer is something that really has plagued me with this stuff – Zhengli's group repeatedly used 'isolate' for 'sample' on Genbank and I've made that mistake here also.

Re. the MERS work, you're dead right – we proposed it, explained that it would likely need review by the P3CO committee equivalent, and then pushed it to Yr4. In the end we didn't do this work – there was already a ton of other more interesting work directly on SARSr-CoVs to do.

The latest line of attack that will be coming out in a follow-up article in the *Intercept* tonight is that in the Y4 report, we show one of the chimeras having more than a log virus output than the parent strain (WIV-1). The NoA was updated in Y3 to say that if this happened we had to report to NIH and cease expts. Ironically, the way *Intercept* found this out is because they now have a copy of our "report to NIH" in which we show this, but of course that's not going to stop them saying we broke the rules on GoF.

The other line of attack is the one Jesse Bloom's pursuing – that we didn't publish sequence data within 6 months of the "final version being received" as per our proposal. Jesse sneakily suggested this in an email to me last night in which he asked for the sequences so he can do SARS-CoV-2 origin analyses, while at the same time tweeting an accusation

that we broke the rules in a chain with Alina Chan and the "Seeker". I'm not sure whether to respond at all, but I might just let him know that all SARSr-CoV sequences we had are already published in our 2020 paper in Nat. Comm. Again – the problem with these accusations is that just being accused of this by the press causes us seven levels of hell, and arguing back is even worse.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance
520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200
New York, NY 10018-6507
USA

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation

From: Kristian G. Andersen [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 10:30 PM

To: Peter Daszak [REDACTED]

Cc: David Morens [REDACTED]; Garry, Robert F [REDACTED] Edward Holmes

[REDACTED] Jason Gale [REDACTED] Rasmussen, Angie

[REDACTED] Robert Kessler <[REDACTED]> Stephen Goldstein

Subject: Re: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

It's harassment, plain and simple - it has absolutely nothing to do with trying to find the truth of how SARS-CoV-2 emerged in the human population.

The way I see it though, we now have (a) the entire US IC having completed their investigation, (b) unredacted grants and annual reports from EcoHealth, and (c) old theses from the WIV.

This is *exactly* the type of information that Ebright, Metzler, Relman, Bloom, Chan, and the rest of the lot have been requesting. Now this work has been completed, what was unearthed? Nothing. Nada. Zilch. No evidence of the virus (or sequence) at the WIV (or anywhere else) prior to the pandemic. No gain-of-function work (despite what Ebright says). The same cloning system used again and again (WIV1). Vero cells used for virus isolation (SARS-CoV-2 loses the FCS in those cells), and no previously unreported viruses isolated (although I note the repeated use of "isolates" in one of the annual reports to describe 11 samples - I myself have made that mistake before). So again, there's nothing.

This absence of evidence is *in fact* evidence of absence in this particular case - there would have been *some* evidence for SARS-CoV-2 in *some* of these documents had it been at the WIV. Yet, nothing.

As for GOF work, again nothing. I note the mention of work with recombinant MERS in the year 3 report for work proposed in year 4 - depending on the nature of work, that could be considered GOF/DURC. However, when reading the year 4 report, I don't see any of that work mentioned - just work with pseudotyped viruses, which is clearly not GOF (or DURC).

Of course, people will take stuff out of context to make *anything* fit a particular narrative. However, there's an expiration date on bullshit and I suspect we're well past due.

K

On Tue, Sep 7, 2021 at 6:28 PM Peter Daszak [REDACTED] wrote:

Here's one of the "journalists" who got the "Scoop". Basically they just FOIA'd NIH, then sued when NIH refused to release, then dumped the documents online and asked for "people with relevant expertise to get in touch". Cue Drs. Ebright, Relman, Chan, Bloom and others to start their attempt at a character assassination...

[Mara Hvistendahl](#)

[@MaraHvistendahl](#)

.

[15h](#)

NEW: We obtained hundreds of pages from NIH detailing EcoHealth Alliance's work with the Wuhan Institute of Virology. We are publishing them in full. With

[@fastlerner](#) and [@theintercept](#) legal team, which filed a FOIA lawsuit for the documents' release

[<image001.jpg>](#)

[New Details Emerge About Coronavirus Research at Chinese Lab](#)

[More than 900 pages of materials related to US.-funded coronavirus research in China were released following a FOIA lawsuit by The Intercept.](#)

theintercept.com

<image002.jpg>

[Mara Hvistendahl](#)

[@MaraHvistendahl](#)

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15h The full documents are here: "Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence" <https://documentcloud.org/documents/21055989-understanding-risk-bat-coronavirus-emergence-grant-notice...>

"Understanding Risk of Zoonotic Virus Emergence in Emerging Infectious Disease Hotspots of Southeast Asia" <https://documentcloud.org/documents/21055988-risk-zoonotic-virus-hotspots-grant-notice...>

<image002.jpg>

[Mara Hvistendahl](#)

[@MaraHvistendahl](#)

.
7h

There is a lot here. [@fastlerner](#) and I are interested in hearing feedback from people with relevant expertise.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance

520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200

New York, NY 10018-6507

USA

Tel.: [REDACTED]

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation

From: David Morens [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 9:07 PM
To: Peter Daszak [REDACTED]
Cc: Garry, Robert F [REDACTED]; Kristian G. Andersen [REDACTED]; Edward Holmes [REDACTED]; Jason Gale <jgale@ecoaia.org>; angela.rasmussen@ecoaia.org [REDACTED]; Robert Kessler [REDACTED]; u6025689@ecoaia.org [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

Do not rule out suing these assholes for slander. d

Sent from my iPhone

David M Morens

OD, NIAID, NIH

On Sep 7, 2021, at 20:39, Peter Daszak [REDACTED] wrote:

To be honest, this whole process is beyond a joke. We're spending a huge amount of staff time dealing with the BS from these FOIA requests even though the grant's been terminated, suspended and funds are still unavailable.

The lab leakers are already stirring up bullshit lines of attack that will bring more negative publicity our way – which is what this is about – a way to line up the GoF attack on Fauci, or the 'risky research' attack on all of us.

Jesse Bloom's now trying to claim we weren't following our proposed rules for data release (not true – all SARSr-CoV RdRp sequences on Genbank in summer 2020, despite the grant being terminated) – he's tagging Alina Chan and 'The Seeker' on Twitter. Ebright's trying to claim we were working on MERS as a 'shadow' line of work. There'll be more to come – just a free-for-all effort to find a few sentences that they can take out of context.

Cheers,

Peter

Peter Daszak

President

EcoHealth Alliance
520 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200
New York, NY 10018-6507
USA

Tel.: +1-212-380-4474

Website: www.ecohealthalliance.org

Twitter: [@PeterDaszak](https://twitter.com/PeterDaszak)

EcoHealth Alliance develops science-based solutions to prevent pandemics and promote conservation

From: Garry, Robert F [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 8:08 PM
To: Kristian G. Andersen [REDACTED]; Edward Holmes [REDACTED]
Cc: Jason Gale [REDACTED]; [angela.rasmussen](mailto:angela.rasmussen@ecohalliance.org); [daszak](mailto:daszak@ecohalliance.org); [dmorens](mailto:dmorens@ecohalliance.org); [kessler](mailto:kessler@ecohalliance.org)
[u6025689](mailto:u6025689@ecohalliance.org)
Subject: Re: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

Totally - that the real story of the FOIAed grants - no SC2 or anything close that could have been converted to it.

Metzl, Chan and others wanted a "forensic investigation." The grants that they thought would be private and written before the pandemic do not mention a new SARS-like virus. YOU can be sure that a new virus 76% similar to SC1 would have been front and center in the applications and progress reports.

My guess this is part of the info the IC used to conclude no bioweapon, likely no engineering - NO SC2 before the pandemic. This Gof debate now very clearly has nothing to do with the origin of SC2.

From: Kristian G. Andersen [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 11:56 PM
To: Edward Holmes [REDACTED]
Cc: Jason Gale [REDACTED]; [angela.rasmussen](mailto:angela.rasmussen@ecohalliance.org); [daszak](mailto:daszak@ecohalliance.org); [dmorens](mailto:dmorens@ecohalliance.org); [kessler](mailto:kessler@ecohalliance.org)
[REDACTED]; Garry, Robert F [REDACTED]; [u6025689](mailto:u6025689@ecohalliance.org)
Subject: Re: The Intercept report on coronavirus research at Chinese labs

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Going through it carefully as we speak (already wasted a few hours) - because that's how idiotic this has become.

Nicely detailed annual reports - makes it easy to show that there's in fact no SARS-CoV-2 in there...

People have lost their minds with this s***.

K

On Tue, Sep 7, 2021 at 4:50 PM Edward Holmes [REDACTED] wrote:

Yes, just more like evidence that they never had SC2 in the lab.

Professor Edward C. Holmes FAA FRS

The University of Sydney

On 8 Sep 2021, at 9:43 am, Jason Gale (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) [REDACTED] wrote:

Just FYI

<https://theintercept.com/2021/09/06/new-details-emerge-about-coronavirus-research-at-chinese-lab/>

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Message

From: Jason Gale (BLOOMBERG/NEWSROOM:)
Sent: 8/20/2021 4:30:14 PM
To: dmorens(); Edward.Holmes()
CC: angela.rasmussen(); benembarekp(); daszak(); kessler(); kga1978(); Garry, Robert F(); u6025689(); vankerkhovem()
Subject: Re:
Attachments: Pangolin-Serology-Nido2021-Poster.pdf

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Thanks, Eddie.

Sounds like this poster will be helpful context for when Peter Daszak et al publish their paper based on the serosurvey of people in Cambodia.

Cheers,
Jason

From: Edward.Holmes() At: 08/21/21 07:25:20 UTC+10:00
To: [dmorens\(\)](#)
Cc: [Jason Gale \(BLOOMBERG/NEWSROOM: \)](#), [rfgarry\(\)](#), [kga1978\(\)](#), [angela.rasmussen\(\)](#), [benembarekp\(\)](#), [daszak\(\)](#), [kessler\(\)](#), [u6025689\(\)](#), [vankerkhovem\(\)](#)
Subject: Re:

It's diabolical nonsense David. Irrespective of what they state in that 'paper', Linfa has found serological evidence for closely related viruses in pangolins dating back several years and the HKU team have similar data (see attachment). Plus the Guangdong pangolins have been my multiple groups in different ways and there is an independent lineage in Guangxi.

The attempt to undermine the pangolin data and the people that generated it one of the shameful examples of anti-science I have ever seen. The reality is that is because the RBD of the Guangdong pangolins is genetically similar to SARS-CoV-2 it becomes an inconvenient data point for those who believe the virus came from a lab in Wuhan hence their attempts to undermine it.

Cheers,

Eddie

PROFESSOR EDWARD C. HOLMES FAA FRS
ARC Australian Laureate Fellow

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Marie Bashir Institute for Infectious Diseases & Biosecurity,
School of Life & Environmental Sciences and School of Medical Sciences,
The University of Sydney | Sydney | NSW | 2006 | Australia

T [REDACTED]
E [REDACTED]

On 21 Aug 2021, at 1:03 am, Morens, David (NIH/NIAID) [E] [REDACTED] wrote:

Thanks to both you and Kristian. Very helpful to know what the experts think, because 50 us mere mortals, phylogenetic and sequencing interpretation is a bit inscrutable.

Yes, although I don't know her personally, I know OF Alina Chan based on two papers of hers I came across, one of which was a screed against Eddie's recent review. It seemed biased, cherry-picked, and not the work of a scientist with integrity.

<image004.gif>

David M. Morens, M.D.

CAPT, United States Public Health Service
Senior Advisor to the Director
Office of the Director
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institutes of Health

[REDACTED]

Bethesda, MD 20892-2520

[REDACTED] (assistant: [REDACTED])

[REDACTED]

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<image005.jpg>

From: Garry, Robert F [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 20, 2021 10:38 AM
To: Morens, David (NIH/NIAID) [E] [REDACTED]; Kristian G. Andersen [REDACTED]

Cc: Jason Gale

[redacted]; [angela.rasmussen](#) [redacted]; [benembarekp](#) [redacted]; [daszak](#) [redacted]; [edward.holmes](#) [redacted]; [kessler](#) [redacted]; [u6025689](#) [redacted]; [vankerkhovem](#) [redacted]

Subject: Re:

David,

This from a really super young investigator Alex Crits-Christoph. The authors concluded: "(a) the pangolin covs are actually from mice (b) actually, they were actually cloned artificial constructs, (c) actually, there were other viruses in the samples as well (oh no! who'd have thought), (d) actually, it's all contaminated with dog dna."

My take: It is garbage and no they [the authors] are not ok - although my supposition is that they are being well compensated for generating this nonsense. Alina Chan [who is a quite dangerous IMO young investigator and is writing a book] is using the very same approach - spouting a lot of pseudoscientific garbage, arguing from "authority." etc., but finding a receptive [and likely wealthy] audience that can put the garbage to work. The whole Dr. Yan/Steve Bannon saga is but one of the examples of this approach.

b

From: "Morens, David (NIH/NIAID) [E]" [redacted]

Date: Friday, August 20, 2021 at 8:56 AM

To: Kristian Andersen [redacted]

Cc: Jason Gale [redacted], "[angela.rasmussen](#)" [redacted]

"[benembarekp](#)" [redacted], "[daszak](#)" [redacted]

[redacted], "[edward.holmes](#)" [redacted], "[kessler](#)" [redacted], "[u6025689](#)" [redacted], "[vankerkhovem](#)" [redacted], Robert Garry <

<[redacted]>

<[redacted]>

Subject: <no subject>

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Do you all know these data? see link below....


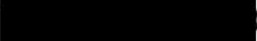


[\[2108.08163\] Cloning vectors and contamination in metagenomic datasets raise concerns over pangolin CoV genome authenticity \(arxiv.org\)](#)

<image006.gif>

David M. Morens, M.D.
CAPT, United States Public Health Service
Senior Advisor to the Director
Office of the Director
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institutes of Health


[redacted]

Bethesda, MD 20892-2520

 (assistant: 



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<image007.jpg>

From: Kristian G. Andersen - 
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2021 8:11 PM
To: Morens, David (NIH/NIAID) [E] 
Cc: Jason Gale
; [angela.rasmussen](#) ; [benembarekp](#) ; [daszak](#) ; [edward.holmes](#) 
; [kessler](#) ; Garry, Robert F
; [u6025689@](#) ; [vankerkhovem](#) 

Subject: Re: The story behind the missing story about the story behind the missing raccoons


I hear La Jolla has some pretty nice beaches - just saying.

Oh wait, I live here - here's what's outside my office:

<image008.jpg>

Happy to save you a spot - you know, 'field' research.

K

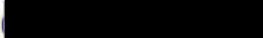





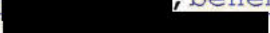

On Thu, Aug 12, 2021 at 5:09 PM Morens, David (NIH/NIAID) [E]  wrote:

You deserve that beach! Reminds me of that Warren Zevon song about "sippin' Fosters in the shade".... Mr. Bad example, i think it was.... d

Sent from my iPhone
David M Morens
OD, NIAID, NIH

On Aug 12, 2021, at 20:00, Jason Gale (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:)  wrote:

Thanks, David. I've actually been tied up with a podcast series on long Covid (while trying to stay on top of the usual vaccine effectiveness stuff. Busyness with which y'all are only too familiar!). But it helps to vent sometimes about you can feel pretty defeated by your job. Thanks for the support. There will be a beach for me to lay on somewhere some day... JG

From: [dmorens](#)  At: 08/13/21 09:05:19 UTC+10:00
To: [Jason Gale \(BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:\)](#) , [angela.rasmussen](#) , [benembarekp](#) , [daszak](#) 
, [edward.holmes](#) , [kessler](#) , [kga1978](#)

[REDACTED], [rfgarry](#) [REDACTED], [u6025689](#) [REDACTED], [vankerkhovem](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: The story behind the missing story about the story behind the missing raccoons




Jason, yikes!, but it is a miracle that with all that work you have still been able to crank out multiple high-calibre articles. I have no idea why anyone up your chanin would jerk you around. Who are these guys anyway???? Just keep doing it and overcome, OK?

<image006.gif>

David M. Morens, M.D.
CAPT, United States Public Health Service
Senior Advisor to the Director
Office of the Director
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
National Institutes of Health

[REDACTED]

Bethesda, MD 20892-2520

 [REDACTED] (assistant: [REDACTED])
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

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<image007.jpg>

From: Jason Gale (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2021 5:53 PM
To: [angela.rasmussen](#) [REDACTED]; [benembarekp](#) [REDACTED]; [daszak](#) [REDACTED]; Morens, David (NIH/NIAID) [E]
[REDACTED]; [edward.holmes](#) [REDACTED]; [kessler](#) [REDACTED]; [kga197](#)
[8](#) [REDACTED]; Garry, Robert F
<[\[REDACTED\]](#); [u6025689](#) [REDACTED]; [vankerkhovem](#) [REDACTED]>
Subject: The story behind the missing story about the story behind the missing raccoons

Hi everyone,
Just letting you know that my story has been turned into a sh!tshow internally. My long awaited feature on why the raccoon dogs were there in Wuhan one minute, gone the next and why we waited 18 months to find out for sure that they were there in the first place, has taken more twists

and turns than any Olympic diver, thanks to some egomaniac editors.
(Please keep that bit to yourselves).

I have even more sympathy for Xiao et al. I'm told now Tuesday for publication, but I wouldn't be surprised if some a-hole higher up the food chain spikes it. To say I am exasperated (and a tad emotional after working 13 days straight) is an understatement.

Kindest regards,

Jason

Message

From: Edward Holmes
[REDACTED]
Sent: 7/28/2021 6:47:58 PM
To: Stephen Goldstein
[REDACTED]
CC: Jason Gale
[REDACTED]
dmorens@[REDACTED] Garry,
Robert F [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: URGENT: Seeking comment
on paper in Nature: Scientific
reports

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Pangolins were all the rage in Feb 2020 - that's when that link was found. So, I think a focus on those species at that time is fully understandable.

PROFESSOR EDWARD C. HOLMES FAA FRS

ARC Australian Laureate Fellow

THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Marie Bashir Institute for Infectious Diseases & Biosecurity,
School of Life & Environmental Sciences and School of Medical Sciences,
The University of Sydney | Sydney | NSW | 2006 | Australia

T [REDACTED]
E [REDACTED]

On 29 Jul 2021, at 9:45 am, Stephen Goldstein [REDACTED] wrote:

Yes it's the focus on bats and pangolins that throws me off. Chris seems to think the lack of those animals are the major findings, whereas it's the presence of the other animals. But, perhaps I'm just misreading it. No doubt they are no very aware the importance of the paper regardless.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 28, 2021, at 4:45 PM, Jason Gale (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Thanks, David.

Your observations and thoughts are always much appreciated! (There was a time once when I would drop Tony an email and he would respond almost immediately. Ha!)

Thanks, Eddie. I will get back to you if there's a quote that would be useful to use.

I'll see if Chris Newman would be willing to share the paper -- it's 2 months earlier than his colleague in China said it was drafted (and three

months after Xiao Xiao's last monthly survey), which makes me think they understood the urgency of their findings.

Kindest regards,

Jason

From: [dmorens](#) [REDACTED] At: 07/29/21 07:38:47
To: [Jason Gale \(BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM: \)](#) , [rfgarry](#) [REDACTED],
[edward.holmes](#) [REDACTED] [u6025689](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Fwd:Re: URGENT: Seeking comment on paper in Nature:
Scientific reports

Jason, I can almost always talk on background or off the record, and if needed I MIGHT be able to speak ON the record. In the US government we all have to get approval from HHS or the Whitehouse to speak to the press. Sometimes they are touchy about certain issues and say no. For many months, I have not been approved to talk about "origins" on the record.

But today, to my total surprise, my boss Tony actually ASKED me to speak to the National Geographic on the record about origins. I interpret this to mean that our government is lightening up but that Tony doesn't want his fingerprints on origin stories.

Bottom line, I can speak to you on background and, if you need or want quotations or attributions, you can request to speak to me formally. They can only say no or, better yet, steer you to Tony....

Have you asked Dr. Newman when he might be able to share the paper he mentioned? I would love to see that....

<mime-attachment.gif>

David M. Morens, M.D.

CAPT, United States Public Health Service

Senior Advisor to the Director

Office of the Director

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

National Institutes of Health
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20892-2520

[REDACTED] (assistant: [REDACTED])
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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<mime-attachment.jpg>

From: Jason Gale (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 28, 2021 4:54 PM
To: Morens, David (NIH/NIAD) [E] [REDACTED]; Garry, Robert F [REDACTED]; [edward.holmes](#) [REDACTED]; [u6025689](#) [REDACTED]
Subject: Fwd:Re: URGENT: Seeking comment on paper in Nature: Scientific reports

Ahhh. This (below) makes more sense! Btw, I'm making some progress with my story, somewhat distracted by the Olympics... Eddie and David, I'm assuming your comments are off the record. Cheers, Jason

----- Original Message -----

From: Chris Newman [REDACTED]
To: JASON GALE
CC: [REDACTED]
At: 07/29/21 00:13:38 UTC+10:00

Dear Jason,

Thanks for your interest. Yes, it was unfortunate that this paper had a chequered publication history. In brief, we had submitted this manuscript to a different journal in Feb 2020, anticipating support and swift publication – job done, data out there to share. Instead, said journal came back with review comments that cast aspersions onto the veracity of our dataset, both in terms of Dr. Xiao's surveying and the extent to which these data might accurately reflect all species sold in the markets. We responded with a revision, but got a second round of review, until at the end of Sept 2020 the journal rejected our paper saying they did not think it would have widespread appeal.

This had three consequences:

- 1) It significantly delayed intended urgency to publish
- 2) It caused us, especially our Chinese co-authors, concern that these data would not be taken seriously / dismissed unless they were properly published in a reputable peer-reviewed journal.
- 3) It caused us to write a revised version of our manuscript that incorporated more data on pangolin trade networks in China.

We were very grateful that Nature Scientific Reports ultimately published our paper – where they, as per all journals currently, struggled to find reviewers, ironically due to covid impacts on academics, teaching, research, etc. They then recommended we ditch the pangolin trade element and (re-)focus on the market trade, which we did (our now re-separated pangolin trade network paper was provisionally accepted elsewhere today, subject to some revisions). And so we ended up where we got to.

As to why our Chinese authors did not take these data directly to the WHO, my interpretation (not that they ever said this themselves) is that they were comfortable writing a report on market surveys to publish in a journal (where we've published dozens of papers on IWT in China with Dr. Zhou), but to take their data to the WHO directly would have required them to go through line management channels that would not be typical to their normal roles in their universities. I might add, however, that although one might speculate that these data would interest the WHO team, where our report corroborates a lack of bats and pangolins (chief covid culprits) for sale in these markets (pangolins are sold much more extensively in southern China), no one from the WHO has subsequently approached us for more details. Drs Xiao and Zhaomin are currently seeking permission to share their raw dataset, awaiting a decision from their institutions.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Regards

Chris

Dr. Chris Newman
Wildlife Conservation Research Unit
University of Oxford

From: Jason Gale (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) [REDACTED]

Sent: 27 July 2021 04:03

To: chris.newman [REDACTED]; christina.buesching [REDACTED]

Subject: URGENT: Seeking comment on paper in Nature: Scientific reports

Dear Drs Buesching and Newman,

I hope you're well. I saw somewhere some information that indicated you are collaborators/colleagues as well as partners, so I hope you don't mind me emailing you both.

As a way of introduction, I'm a journalist based in Melbourne, Australia, reporting on the pandemic for the international news organization Bloomberg News.

I note with interest the paper in Scientific Reports in June of which you are two of the five authors. (I have separately emailed Prof. Macdonald and Dr. Zhou in China.

The paper created quite a rumble since it confirmed what many scientists researching the origins of Covid-19 had previously speculated: that markets in Wuhan (including the Huanan wholesale seafood market) were selling live animals known to be susceptible to SARS-like coronaviruses before the emergence of SARS-CoV-2.

My reason for contacting you is to see if you might be able to assist me better understand to what extent local, national and international authorities knew about this, and what was done to alert them.

Your co-author Zhou Zhaomin told me in an email in June that a draft of the paper was initially completed in April 2020. After rejections by several journals, it was submitted to Scientific Reports in October 2020, he said. Dr Zhou said: "We were unwilling to disclose it to any other parties, unless the peer reviewers think the paper is almost ready." He said further "I don't think it is about the level of openness and transparency. In the paper, we have discussed why it was difficult to ascertain which species were on sale, even to the genus level, relying solely on the responsible market authority's official sales records and disclosures."

Springer Nature told me they submitted the paper as per their procedure to the WHO almost immediately. Maria van Kerkhove at WHO confirmed she received a copy titled "Pangolin trading in China: Wuhan's alibi in the origin of Covid-19" in October, however, it got buried under the heavy weight of submissions and pre-prints that she was receiving via email, and it was essentially overlooked. Dr Van Kerkove expressed regret that neither the journal nor the authors made direct, more overt contact with the WHO research team alerting them to their findings ahead of their well-publicized field trip to Wuhan in January-February 2021.

I appreciate that research into the origins of Covid-19 has become a hotbed of political posturing and accusations, mostly based on rumors, and circumstantial and unfounded "evidence". That's mostly why I find your research on the animals found to be sold live in Wuhan markets so interesting and compelling.

Dr Zhou mentioned reliance on the responsible market authority's official sales records and disclosures for obtaining information on the types of animals sold in Wuhan markets. This would indicate records may have been available to local and provincial authorities, who may have been able to identify possible animal vectors in Wuhan for further analysis and trace-back. Yet, the operator, vendors and regular customers of the Huanan

market denied being aware that such live animals were sold in the market when they were interviewed by the WHO-led research team on Jan. 31.

I suspect it's difficult for researchers in China to discuss freely the level of awareness that existed in Wuhan of the presence of live SARS-permissive animals sold in markets there, so I am hoping you might feel more comfortable discussing the information you have.

Specifically, could you please tell me what you know about:

- the extent to which your research findings were shared ahead of publication with local, provincial and national authorities in China?
- Whether you considered sharing the unpublished research findings with the WHO personally, and, if not, why? And if you did, why you didn't do so in the end?

Please don't take my questions as an accusation of any neglect or wrongdoing on your part. That's not at all my intention.

What is clear to me is that valuable information wasn't in the hands of researchers working on the WHO-led mission as early as it could have been, and that at some point, critical information wasn't passed on to them or (supposedly) to their Chinese counterparts.

What I am not clear about is whether there was a deliberate attempt to obfuscate the facts about the presence of live animals in Wuhan markets, and, if so, who is responsible?

Your earliest assistance in helping to shed some light and clarify what you know about this will be much appreciated.

Kindest regards,

Jason

Jason Gale, MHIthSec
Senior editor & chief biosecurity correspondent | Bloomberg News

@jwgale | LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/jason-gale/6/249/a56>

<ATT00002.jpg><ATT00001.gif>

