

Key Researcher in Wuhan Thanks Fauci for Downplaying Lab Leak

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✓ Fact Checked

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Emails released through the Freedom of Information Act show Dr. Anthony Fauci, chief medical adviser to the president, was thanked by Peter Daszak after publicly dismissing the idea that SARS-CoV-2 was leaked from the lab
- › Daszak is head of EcoHealth Alliance, which received a \$3.4 million award to study how viruses move from species to species. The group hired the Wuhan Institute of Virology and paid \$598,500 over five years
- › The NIH pulled the funding in 2020 and immediately reinstated it with additional safety protocols Daszak called "impossible and irrelevant conditions," an "indefensible decision," "absurd" and "heinous"
- › Daszak was appointed by WHO to the team investigating the Wuhan lab and is the secretary and treasurer of the Global Virome Project, with an aim of more viral gain-of-function research
- › Through all the noise, Nicholas Wade, retired science writer for The New York Times, makes a balanced and published argument that the preponderance of clues points to the virus originating in the lab

In an interview with a reporter from the Washington Examiner, Nicholas Wade, retired science writer for The New York Times, postulated the reason the media and others

didn't further explore the idea that the SARS-CoV-2 virus leaked from a lab was that the theory was initially and publicly proposed by then-President Trump.¹

Wade believes the theory became politically polarized, burying the possibility it would be fully and independently explored. In April 2020, Trump made a comment that he had seen evidence supporting the theory that SARS-CoV-2 originated in a lab in China. At a White House event, he was asked about the evidence, to which he replied, "I cannot tell you that. I'm not allowed to tell you that."²

His inability to disclose the source was immediately pounced upon by the media, prompting headlines that stated he claimed to have evidence but cited no details. Just days later, mainstream media began refuting Trump's comment, claiming the virus was not "cooked up in a Chinese lab,"³ and headlines proclaimed there was "Exactly Zero Evidence COVID-19 Came From a Lab."⁴

Many reporters also claimed what one reporter in the LA Times wrote: "The story has all the earmarks of a conspiracy theory."⁵ In this case, however, the truth is beginning to come out. As I've reported in the past months, many scientists believe the evidence demonstrates it is nearly **impossible for the virus to have developed in nature**.⁶ Within the past month the idea that the virus originated in a lab in Wuhan, China, has been gaining mainstream media attention.⁷

The questions appeared to start after the World Health Organization's joint report with Beijing was released, which concluded the **lab leak hypothesis** was "extremely unlikely."⁸ However, as demonstrated by interviews with at least one member of the investigation team, it appeared the group's assessment at the lab was not thorough.

Challenging the idea of the origins of the virus has been seen as career suicide for scientists,⁹ but the recent release of emails¹⁰ from Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) and chief medical adviser to the president, has shed new light that may ultimately create an environment where the truth will be exposed.

Fauci Works With Group to Quash Lab Leak Theory

Under the Freedom of Information Act, BuzzFeed obtained and published online¹¹ over 3,000 pages of emails written to and from Fauci from various sources. The emails revealed an exchange between Fauci and Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance based in New York.

In the published documents is a telling email from Daszak to Fauci, "to say a personal thank you on behalf of our staff and collaborators."¹² This email came hours after **Fauci** publicly dismissed the idea that SARS-CoV-2 was accidentally leaked from a Wuhan lab.

Earlier in the day the Washington Examiner¹³ reported that Fauci was asked directly about the hypothesis the virus leaked from a lab and he said the scientific evidence "is totally consistent with a jump of a species from an animal to a human."

EcoHealth Alliance is a research group that secured a grant from the NIH to do research on coronaviruses in Wuhan before the pandemic broke in 2019.¹⁴ As reported in a February 2021 article in the Austin American-Statesman, the original grant from the NIH was for \$3.4 million awarded in 2014 to an organization, "which aims to protect people from viruses that jump from species to species."¹⁵

EcoHealth Alliance turned around and hired the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), with which they had been collaborating since 2004,¹⁶ paying \$598,500 over five years.¹⁷ WIV had reportedly secured approval from the NIH and the U.S. State Department to do the research.

In February 2021, the Austin American-Statesman reporter attempted to refute the claim that Fauci and the **NIH had funded gain-of-function research** "on a bat coronavirus, which 'created' SARS-CoV-2,"¹⁸ despite incriminating evidence to the contrary as I have reported. But now, as I will show below, Fauci's emails show that he knew much more than he was admitting to.

The very person who funded and worked closely with WIV was also appointed to the joint inspection team led by WHO and Beijing.¹⁹ The report was criticized over its strong conclusions that were based on little evidence. In a later 60 Minutes interview, Daszak admitted they had taken at face value the word of the Chinese officials in their investigation.²⁰

NIH Finally Seeks Accountability for Millions in Grant Money

Early in 2020, the NIH pulled the multimillion-dollar grant from EcoHealth Alliance and then reinstated it in July with what Daszak termed “absurd conditions.”²¹ In a press release from EcoHealth Alliance they expressed displeasure at the conditions placed on the research grant, writing:²²

“We were initially pleased to learn that the National Institutes of Health had reversed its indefensible decision to terminate our funding for a five year research project on emerging coronaviruses, during this coronavirus pandemic.

However, NIH's letter cynically reinstates and instantly suspends EcoHealth Alliance's funding, then attempts to impose impossible and irrelevant conditions that will effectively block us from continuing this critical work.”

The Wall Street Journal reported some of the conditions under which EcoHealth Alliance could continue to receive funding. These included:²³

- A sample of the new **coronavirus** that Wuhan researchers used for genetic sequencing.
- Arrange an inspection of the WIV by an outside team of scientists that would review the records “with specific attention to addressing the question of whether WIV staff had SARS-CoV-2 in their possession prior to December 2019.”

In their response to the letter from the NIH outlining the conditions of the reinstatement, The Wall Street Journal reports, “EcoHealth Alliance said in its response that it hadn’t sent any grant funds to the Wuhan Institute before the grant was suspended, though it has provided funding to the institute in previous years.”²⁴

Daszak called the demands for information about how millions of taxpayer dollars were being spent “heinous,” and in an email to Nature, his partner scientist at WIV, Shi Zhengli, called it “outrageous.”²⁵ Shi Zhengli is the WIV virologist who has been working with EcoHealth Alliance for over 15 years on viruses originating in bats.

In a statement to Nature, Daszak expressed concern that the additional information requested by the NIH about how millions of dollars are being spent was “pressure of a very aggressive administration.”²⁶ Tapping into what is known to be a strong motivating factor – fear – he insinuated that the work being done by EcoHealth Alliance was all that is standing between any virus and human health, saying:²⁷

“And it turns out that they decided that this issue and our work is going to be one of the angles of attack. That’s extremely unfortunate. The winner in all of this is the virus, and not just this virus – SARS-CoV-2 – but all the other viruses.”

Fauci Plays Word Games in Gain-of-Function Research Funding

As shared in this 15-minute video,²⁸ Fauci has been a chief supporter of gain-of-function research. In 2014, the Obama Administration put a ban on gain-of-function research, which Fauci reversed in 2017. The research, according to the NIH guidelines, did not follow safety protocols in the specific grant to the EcoHealth Alliance shared with WIV.

That same lab was cited in 2018 for having substandard safety protocols. As noted in the video, in response to the pandemic, The Hill’s Rising, a morning news show, shared that Fauci pushed for more [gain-of-function research](#), mentioning the Global Virome Project (GVP).²⁹

The goal of GVP is to raise several trillion dollars to fund the discovery of zoonotic virus threats to humans,³⁰ which includes gain-of-function research. Interestingly, the same Peter Daszak who is head of EcoHealth Alliance, receiving multimillion-dollar grants from the U.S. government, is also the secretary and treasurer of GVP.³¹

Daszak’s influence in suppressing information that the pandemic could have had a [lab origin](#) runs even deeper. In a Freedom of Information Act release, U.S. Right to Know³² found Daszak had penned a paper published in the Lancet that was central to the argument dismissing the idea the virus could have been released from a lab.

He orchestrated the paper signed by 27 scientists to “avoid the appearance of a political statement.”³³ Getting back to Fauci’s finger in the pie, it is apparent from his answers in the video above that he now denies ever having funded gain-of-function research, even though there’s irrefutable evidence that he did as I reported in, “[The Biggest Flip-Flop Ever – Who’s Going to Jail?](#)”

Science Writer Makes Strong Argument for Lab Leak Origin

In an interview with a reporter from the Washington Examiner, Wade talked about what would happen if it were accepted that virologists indeed developed SARS-CoV-2 in the lab.³⁴

“Well, this is of course one of the reasons virologists have not been too keen to explore this possibility. I think there will definitely be a public backlash. People will want to scrutinize much more closely the safety conditions virologists thought were adequate and what experiments they were doing.”

Wade has been interviewed by several reporters in response to a paper he wrote titled, “Origin of COVID – Following the Clues: Did People or Nature Open Pandora’s Box at Wuhan?”³⁵ In this paper he stated that if we’re ever to solve the mystery of where this novel virus came from, people must be willing to follow the science as “it offers the only sure thread through the maze.”

Unlike Fauci, who appears to be intent on distancing himself and the NIH from responsibility for the research that appears to have resulted in the virus and ultimately the financial and mental health disaster that followed, Wade presents a balanced approach to the data and goes on to write:³⁶

“It’s important to note that so far there is no direct evidence for either theory. Each depends on a set of reasonable conjectures but so far lacks proof. So I have only clues, not conclusions, to offer. But those clues point in a specific direction.”

To summarize his paper, Wade believes the preponderance of clues lean toward the virus originating in a laboratory setting, most likely from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, after having undergone manipulation to increase infectiousness and pathology in humans.

In the meantime, the arguments laid out by government officials and supported in the media for the past year in support of natural origin are grounded in inconclusive speculations that require you to throw out scientifically possible scenarios. Wade writes:³⁷

"It seems to me that proponents of lab escape can explain all the available facts about SARS2 considerably more easily than can those who favor natural emergence. It's documented that researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology were doing gain-of-function experiments designed to make coronaviruses infect human cells and humanized mice.

This is exactly the kind of experiment from which a SARS2-like virus could have emerged. The researchers were not vaccinated against the viruses under study, and they were working in the minimal safety conditions of a BSL2 laboratory. So escape of a virus would not be at all surprising."

Sources and References

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- ² [CNBC, April 30, 2020](#)
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- ⁴ [University of Minnesota, May 12, 2020](#)
- ⁶ [BioEssays, 2020; doi.org/10.1002/bies.202000240](#)
- ^{7, 8} [NPR, March 31, 2021](#)
- ⁹ [MIT Technology Review, March 18, 2021](#)
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- ^{21, 25, 26, 27} [Nature, August 21, 2020](#)
- ²² [EcoHealth Alliance, August 2020](#)

- ²⁸ YouTube, May 12, 2021, 6:40
- ²⁹ Global Virome Project
- ³⁰ Global Virome Project, Support
- ³¹ Global Virome Project, Leadership Team
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- ³⁴ Washington Examiner, video 8:17
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