

Pro-Vax Bully Implicated in Virus Engineering Program

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Dr. Peter Hotez, dean for the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, has repeatedly dismissed the idea of a lab accident or deliberate spread, calling it “an outlandish conspiracy theory”
- › He’s also a fierce critic of the ongoing Congressional probe into gain-of-function research, decrying it as a “threat to American biomedical science”
- › As it turns out, Hotez has funded risky gain-of-function research on coronaviruses at the now-infamous Wuhan Institute of Virology
- › Hotez’s conflicts of interest are particularly pertinent as he’s on The Lancet COVID-19 Commission, where he co-chairs the COVID-19 Vaccines and Therapeutics task force
- › Hotez has a long history of public vitriol, insulting and threatening parents of vaccine-injured children and anyone who doesn’t buy the official one-size-fits-all vaccine narrative. Anyone who disagrees with him is “antiscience” and, in his mind at least, guilty of a “hate crime” and should be punished with cyberwarfare

Dr. Peter Hotez, dean for the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, has repeatedly dismissed the idea of a lab accident or deliberate spread, calling it “an outlandish conspiracy theory.” He’s also a fierce critic of the ongoing Congressional probe into gain-of-function research, decrying it as a “threat to American biomedical science.”¹

Well, Hotez, the lab leak denialist and Congressional probe critic, has now been outed as a funder and project leader of risky gain-of-function research on coronaviruses at the now-infamous Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV).

Hotez Developed SARS Vaccine in Case of Lab Release

Hotez's dismissal of the lab escape theory is particularly ironic considering he received a \$6.1 million grant² from the National Institutes of Health in 2012 for the development of a SARS vaccine in case of an "accidental release from a laboratory," "deliberate spreading of the virus by a terrorist attack," or a zoonotic spillover event. According to the grant abstract:³

"We have identified a highly promising lead candidate vaccine antigen, the receptor binding domain (RBD) of the SARS-CoV spike (S) protein that can induce potent neutralizing antibody response and protection against SARS-CoV infection.

Our objective is to develop a highly effective and safe recombinant RBD-based SARS vaccine that can be used in humans for prevention of future SARS outbreak and for biodefense preparedness."

The research under that grant took place from 2012 until 2017. After spending five years preparing for the possibility of an accidental or deliberate release of SARS, why would Hotez think a lab leak of SARS-CoV-2 was out of the question?

Hotez Funded Creation of Chimeric Coronavirus

Clearly, Hotez is no stranger to the possibility of lab leaks. Could it be that his dismissal of the lab leak theory, and the Congressional inquiry into gain-of-function research, is based in fear that he may be implicated in SARS-CoV-2's creation? As reported by U.S. Right to Know (USRTK):⁴

“While casting concerns about Wuhan’s labs as ‘fringe,’ Hotez has not mentioned his own connection to a project involving a laboratory-generated chimeric SARS-related coronavirus that has come under Congress’ microscope. The project was helmed by Zhengli Shi, a senior scientist and ‘virus hunter’ at the Wuhan Institute of Virology nicknamed the ‘Bat Lady.’

As part of his NIH grant, Hotez subcontracted funding for research on combined or ‘chimeric’ coronaviruses, a scientific paper⁵ shows. Hotez’s grant⁶ underwrote two of Shi’s collaborators on the project.

In the 2017 paper⁷ co-funded by Hotez, Shi and her colleagues generated a recombinant virus from two SARS-related coronaviruses: ‘rWIV1-SHC014S.’ It’s not clear whether the paper co-funded by Hotez should have been stopped under a temporary ‘pause’ on gain-of-function work before 2017.

However, some independent biosecurity experts have said research on this chimeric virus in some ways epitomizes lapses in NIH oversight of risky research in the years before the COVID-19 pandemic.

A prior study⁸ of one of the coronaviruses that comprised the chimera, WIV1, found it to be ‘poised for human emergence.’ Another prior paper⁹ on the other coronavirus, SHC014, stated that its future study in lab-generated viruses may be ‘too risky to pursue.’

‘The work here should have been at the very least, heavily scrutinized,’ said David Relman, a Stanford microbiologist and biosecurity expert. ‘This work should have been heavily reviewed for [gain-of-function], and probably should have been subject to the pause prior to December 2017.’”

The Ties That Bind Hotez, EcoHealth Alliance and the WIV

As explained in USRTK’s report¹⁰ and revealed in the 2017 paper¹¹ titled, “Cross-Neutralization of SARS Coronavirus-Specific Antibodies Against Bat SARS-Like Coronaviruses,” another funding source of this joint project was the EcoHealth Alliance.

The NIH grant¹² behind EcoHealth's part of the study has already come under scrutiny, as it involved the creation of chimeric coronaviruses at the Wuhan lab. As reported by USRTK:¹³

"Specifically, an EcoHealth Alliance grant report¹⁴ obtained by congressional investigators demonstrated that a WIV1-SHC014 chimera generated thousands of times the viral load and enhanced lethality in mice with human airway cells. This prompted concerns among some biosecurity experts, scientists and members of Congress.

In response to questions from congressional Republicans, NIH acknowledged¹⁵ that the research was out of compliance with its own regulations on gain-of-function research.'

In this limited experiment, laboratory mice infected with SHC014 WIV1 bat coronavirus became sicker than those infected with WIV1 bat coronavirus,' the letter read. 'As sometimes occurs in science, this was an unexpected result rather than something the scientists set out to do.'"

So far, Hotez has not been forthcoming about his apparent conflict of interest. On the contrary, he's denied that his NIH grant supported Shi's controversial research project at the WIV.

In an August 9, 2022, Twitter post,¹⁶ Ebright pointed out that such denials are provably false, as funding from NIH grant AI098775¹⁷ (Hotez's grant) is acknowledged as a funding source in Shi's paper,¹⁸ "Cross-Neutralization of SARS Coronavirus-Specific Antibodies Against Bat SARS-Like Coronaviruses."

Hotez Is Part of The Lancet COVID-19 Commission

Hotez's conflicts of interest are all the more pertinent when you consider he's on The Lancet COVID-19 Commission, where he co-chairs the COVID-19 Vaccines and Therapeutics task force.¹⁹ Richard Ebright, a professor of chemistry at Rutgers University, told USRTK:²⁰

“The construction and threat-characterization of rWIV1-SHC014 was – unequivocally – gain-of-function research. It is a conflict of interest that, to my knowledge, has not previously been disclosed to The Lancet Commission ... and that surely will be of interest to The Lancet Commission.”

As coincidence would have it, EcoHealth Alliance president Peter Daszak was also on the Lancet Commission back when its COVID Origins task force was initially set up.²¹ Daszak was eventually “recused”²² from the Origins task force after his conflicts of interest were brought to light, garnering widespread criticism and lack of trust. The task force has now closed down permanently.²³

Daszak was also selected by the Chinese to be part of the World Health Organization’s initial task force to investigate the origin of SARS-CoV-2. That task force has also been dismantled due to conflicts of interest and less than credible results, and has been replaced with a new working group.

Like Hotez, Daszak also went on record, early on, dismissing the lab-origin theory as “pure baloney,”²⁴ and he was the mastermind behind the publication of a “scientific consensus statement” signed by 27 scientists, condemning the lab leak theory as “conspiracy theory.”^{25,26}

Overall, it looks like Hotez and Daszak are reading from the same scripts. They’re also clearly funding the same controversial and highly risky research that likely played a major role in the COVID pandemic.

Hotez, One of the Most Shockingly Hateful People in Medicine

Hotez has made headlines a number of times through the years, typically delivering some kind of hateful rhetoric. Hotez has publicly stated he wants to “snuff out” vaccine skeptics,²⁷ for example, and in May 2021 [called for cyberwarfare measures](#) to be deployed against people who share vaccine safety information, and he did this in the highly reputable science journal Nature, no less.²⁸

Over the years, Hotez has repeatedly spewed vitriol at parents of vaccine-injured children and called for physical harm and imprisonment of people who don't agree with the one-size-fits-all vaccine agenda, so it was rather funny when he whined and complained about getting bombarded with "anti-vaxx hate speech" in response to his cyberwarfare call.²⁹

Hotez is not above casting an evil eye on other scientists either. As reported by independent journalist Paul Thacker in an August 9, 2022, Substack article titled, "Peter Hotez Sees Aggression Everywhere But in the Mirror":³⁰

"Patrolling scientific discourse, Hotez has a knack for discovering 'antiscience' in anyone who disagrees with him. Jeffrey Sachs, economics professor at Columbia University and chair of an international commission on COVID-19, charged in a wide-ranging interview³¹ last week that the National Institutes of Health and allied scientists were impeding an investigation into how the COVID-19 pandemic started.

Since the pandemic's beginning, virologists have been attacking anyone who asks hard questions about what might have started this outbreak. Predictably ... Hotez went on the assault, tweeting that Sachs, as leader of the Lancet Commission, did not represent the views of science.

Much like a Pentagon general wrapping himself in freedom and the flag to demand more federal monies for another foreign war ... Hotez has been shrouding himself in the mantle of science to denigrate anyone who questions taxpayer funding for dangerous virus research by the National Institutes of Health."

Lancet's COVID Origin Task Force Disbanded Over Dishonesty

Sachs was in fact the one who shut down the Lancet Commission's COVID Origins task force, a decision he says began with concerns about conflicts of interest between Daszak and the WIV, but in addition to that, Sachs claims he also came to realize that

Daszak was “not always telling the truth.” The final straw came when Sachs sacked Daszak and members of the task force suddenly attacked him for being “antiscience.”

“ My own experience was to witness close up how they’re ... trying to keep our eyes on something else ... away from even asking the questions that we’re talking about. ~ Jeffrey Sachs, The Lancet COVID-19 Commission Chair”

Shortly thereafter, a Freedom of Information Act request brought previously hidden NIH documents to light, and Sachs realized that those who were attacking him also had undisclosed ties that made their ability to get to the truth doubtful at best. At that point, he decided to disband the whole task force.

“My own experience was to witness close up how they’re ... trying to keep our eyes on something else ... away from even asking the questions that we’re talking about,” Sachs said in his Current Affairs interview.³²

“Although Sachs did not name specific task force members who assailed him, it’s not hard to imagine who they were,” Thacker writes. Pulling up the archived webpage for the now-defunct task force, we find no fewer than seven members with direct professional and/or financial ties to Daszak: Peter Hume, Gerald Keusch, Supaporn Wacharapluesadee, Danielle Anderson, Linda Saif, Stanley Perlman and Sai Kit Lam. (In his article, Thacker details those ties.)

Hotez in Daszak’s Corner

Curiously, rather than supporting Sachs — or at bare minimum feigning concern about Daszak’s dishonesty and this extraordinary level of conflicts of interest — Hotez has defended Daszak, shooting down any and all critique with a single word: “**Antiscience.**” As noted by Thacker:³³

“Anyone interested in joining the Hotez crusade against antiscience, should be forewarned: his scripture can be difficult to follow. The registry of the sinful often changes, with names of heretics rotating in and out of sermons, depending on political expediency.

In late 2020 when members of QAnon seemed to be hiding under every American bed, Hotez preached that members of the online conspiracy were mixing with anti-vaxxers and neo-Nazis to create a ‘globalizing anti-science confederacy or empire.’

A year later, QAnon fell out of the news, prompting Hotez to refocus ... The threat of anti-science aggression now arose from three sources: far right members of Congress and conservative news outlets; an online ‘disinformation dozen’; and Russian propaganda ...

Four months later – surprise!!! – Hotez discovered antiscience was more complex and multifaceted. Forgetting to cite Russia, Hotez identified a ‘troubling new expansion of antiscience aggression’ and railed in PLOS Biology against the three new horsemen of the antiscience apocalypse:³⁴

- 1. Far-right members of the US Congress;*
- 2. The conservative news outlets and;*
- 3. A group of thought leaders who provide intellectual underpinnings to fuel the first two elements.*

Cobbling together a set of disconnected thoughts, Hotez centered the threat to science on various accusations made against the NIH’s Anthony Fauci, as well as media reports on Peter Daszak. The essay touched on Nazis – of course!!! – and ended with a plea for swift and positive action that included ‘federal hate-crime protections’ for scientists who were being criticized.”

Who or What Is Hotez Really Fighting For?

In his article, Thacker goes on to review several other bizarre incidences involving Hotez. Most recently, he called scientific experts invited to testify before Congress “fringe elements” testifying and promoting “outlandish conspiracies.” So much for Ph.D.’s and med school. He also accused Sen. Rand Paul of promoting conspiracies.

*“With a final flourish, Hotez proposed a new threat to science a couple days back: gain of function ‘conspiracy guys’ allying themselves with antivaccine activists. But it’s not hard to imagine that Russians and Nazis will make another appearance in a Hotez tweet or essay soon to come,” Thacker concludes.*³⁵

Here’s the take-home: The reason Hotez protects Daszak and rails against “antiscience” is because it protects Fauci, and Fauci is the one Hotez is really beholden to. He’s received millions of dollars in grants from the NIH – and so has Daszak and a lot of other people who conduct completely unnecessary and dangerous research.

If Daszak goes down for illegal research, so does Fauci, and with him, the biggest research purse strings in America, if not the world. Ending gain-of-function research would have the same withering effect on funding – and hence careers – which is why anyone who questions the sanity of gain-of-function research is “antiscience” and should be cyberattacked on sight. So, all that hateful rhetoric? It all comes down to protecting self-serving interests. Who would have guessed?

Sources and References

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