

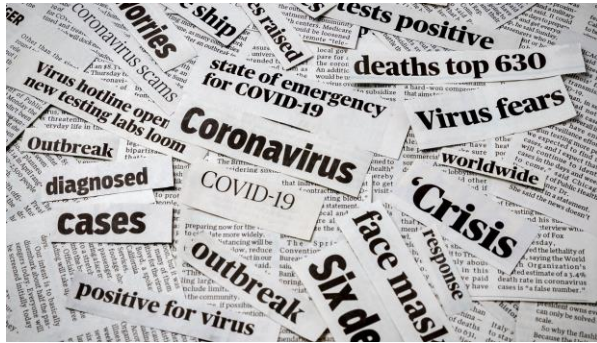
Was Covid-19 engineered?

By Harriet McLauchlan

If you heard the phrase “Covid 19” three years ago you would have no idea what it meant but now, it’s part of our everyday vocabulary. For the past two years, society has been overwhelmed with news about Covid 19 - delta, omicron, pandemic, lockdowns and restrictions. There are many things we have learnt about this deadly virus, but one question is still shrouded in mystery, where did covid come from? Certain conspiracy theorists believe it was created on a computer, while others believe it may have escaped from the lab that was conducting research on it. Understandably, the people who are spreading this information are angry - this disease has forced us to lockdown and pause our lives, stopped many people's streams of income and taken away our freedom. This anger they feel makes them want to find something - or someone to blame - they use this blame as a defense mechanism and as a form of escape from having to feel the other hard emotions that come to the surface otherwise. These people are fueled by the misinformation spread throughout the internet and have fallen victim to fake news. In this report, I will discuss why I believe covid came into existence from natural causes, not released from a lab, or created by humans. I will review the research that has looked into matching covid 19 with the previous coronavirus found in bats, the required level of safety guidelines that labs with such high biosecurity risks have to follow and finally the evidence that the genetic mutations found on covid could not have been created by a software design.

Bats

Scientists have found evidence of the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) in Horseshoe bats - this is the virus that was the origin of Covid 19. The same coronavirus found in bats has been sequenced and matched with the Covid 19 we are now experiencing in humans. It is clear that the two viruses are closely related and that this is the origin of our current pandemic, rather than the theories promoted by conspiracy theorists. I believe that the disease was transmitted from these bats - either directly by ingestion, or through a carrier animal. " By comparing the available genome sequence data for known coronavirus strains, we can firmly



determine that SARS-CoV-2 originated through natural processes," said Kristian Andersen, PhD, an associate professor of immunology and microbiology at Scripps Research, further backing up this information. We know that this is likely because it has happened before, with other coronaviruses eg. the SARS disease which was widespread in China, where thousands of people became sick. The question



remains - how could this disease come from bats hidden away in caves to humans? There is substantial proof that in the specific province in China, Wuhan, where the bats usually reside, the Bats are available to purchase in wet markets as unique cuisine. It's highly likely that at these wet markets, someone ate a bat that previously had coronavirus. This shows a direct link between humans and bats, and as Robert Garry, a virologist at Tulane

University stated "Once you understand there were infected animals in the market, then multiple spillovers are not just a possibility, they're what you would expect at that point". Once "patient zero" became infected the disease spread quickly and evolved and changed (added genetic mutations) as it was transmitted through humans, thus starting the global pandemic.

Security

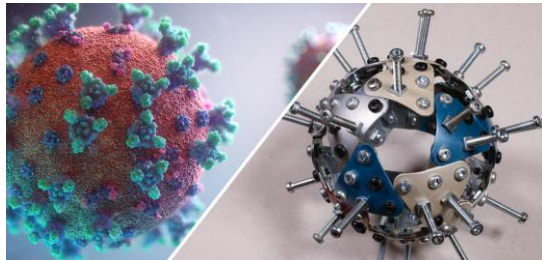
One place conspiracy theorists are certain Covid 19 came from is The Wuhan Institute of Virology. This is one of the handfuls of places that have been cleared to handle level four pathogens (which is an organism that causes disease). This means it has achieved the highest bioresearch safety level, BSL-4 and in 2015, was the first lab in China to reach it. This means they can host research on some of the most dangerous/infectious pathogens eg; Ebola and certain Marburg diseases. These labs serve a purpose as a ground to study infectious diseases and toxins that pose a high risk of infection for which there is no vaccine or therapy available. SARS-CoV-2 - the disease that creates covid requires a lab that is BSL-3 or higher. To qualify for this rating there are many safety measures and security that need to be in place. Some of these measures include but are not limited to airtight doors, ventilation systems, mandatory positive pressure suits, routine equipment and facility checks, strict waste management requirements, the ability to have off-site monitors able to pinpoint exact problems and shut down operations. Alongside this, there are a number of qualification tests that must be undertaken in order for someone to be allowed onto the premises. I understand that sometimes things can come down to human error, but facilities with these capabilities have multiple back

- up options and automated systems in place to compensate for this possibility. “The lab-leak scenario gets a lot of attention, you know, on places like Twitter,” but “there’s no evidence that this virus was in a lab,” said University of Utah scientist Stephen Goldstein, showing that there may have not been an opportunity for the lab leak to occur in the first place. Knowing all this about the safety requirements, I believe this leaves no room for mistakes, especially of global devastation proportions.



Man-made

A big question that has been suggested about Covid 19 is - Was this disease the product of purposeful manipulation? In other words, was SARS-CoV-2 designed by some sort of human agent? There may be some naive people that believe this is a possibility but there are many reasons it is not. When this theory began to gain popularity, there was an article written by two Chinese scientists about the possibility of coronavirus being man made but this concluded with very little evidence and was later withdrawn from any public platform due to the inability to back their claims (*Health Feedback*, 2020). Even after these claims were proved to be false the theory continued to gain traction, some claiming it was a product of genetic mutation and engineering. This was based on a concept uploaded to a scientific database, trying

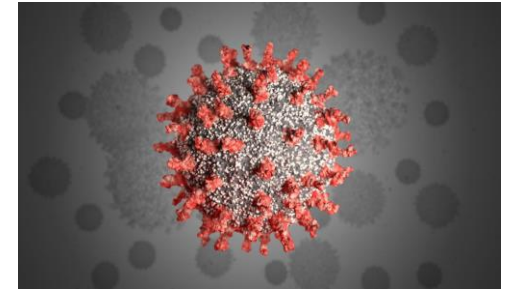


to prove that Covid 19 was actually the novel coronavirus injected with genetic material from the human disease HIV. Many scientists led studies on these ideas and have proved there are significant flaws in both the design and execution and this was also withdrawn, proving the lack of confidence that these conspiracy theorists have in their theories. One of these scientists was Kristian Andersen, who shared "These two features of the virus, the mutations in the RBD portion of the spike protein and its distinct backbone, rule out laboratory manipulation as a potential origin for SARS-CoV-2"

Conclusion

In light of all of this information, I believe that there is no possibility for coronavirus to be a product of human manipulation.

Understandably, Covid has been a huge focus of scientists and researchers' time and effort to find more out about this previously unknown disease. This research has proved that although we don't know everything, we know that Covid 19 definitely came from natural causes. In this report, I have disproved many conspiracy theories, firstly, by explaining the sequencing that has matched with the previous coronavirus from bats, and this is clearly the source of the virus. Secondly, the high-security requirements for research labs of this type means there is no room for viruses to escape, and finally the inability to create something man-made, this complex and different through any software or computer programs. All in all, I think we can all agree, Covid 19 was NOT engineered or to do with any human agent or manipulation.



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