

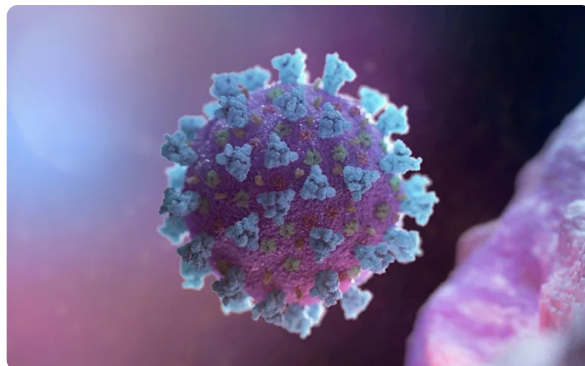


The Telegraph

Scientists created false narrative over suspected Covid leak from Wuhan lab, say experts

Sarah Knapton

Fri, August 20, 2021, 3:49 PM · 3 min read



Covid-19 - Reuters

The scientific establishment created a false narrative about whether coronavirus leaked from a Chinese lab, and dismissed critics as “conspiracy theorists”, experts have claimed.

In a new documentary for Channel 4 looking into whether the virus escaped from a [laboratory in](#)

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Jeremy Farrar, president of the Wellcome Trust, wrote a letter in The Lancet stating: "We stand together to strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that Covid-19 does not have a natural origin."

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However, it later emerged that one of the key people behind the letter was Peter Daszak, who had worked closely with Wuhan scientists researching Sars-related coronaviruses in bats. An addendum to The Lancet letter setting out his links to the Chinese lab was not published until June this year.

A further article published in Nature Medicine also claimed there was no evidence to suggest that the virus had been manipulated. But scientists told filmmakers it was wrong to draw such conclusions based on the available evidence.

David Relman, professor of microbiology and immunology at Stanford University, a member of [President Joe Biden's intelligence team](#), said: "I was a little perplexed and a little bit upset with five very good scientists, some of whom I know well, who I thought stepped way out beyond what they should have been saying, based on the data available to all of us."

Richard Ebright, professor of chemistry and chemical biology at Rutgers University, added: "These were not scientific papers, they did not

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“A small group of scientists, aided by journalists, established and enforced a false narrative that science showed Sars-Cov-2 was a natural zoonotic spillover and a further false narrative that this was the scientific consensus.”

The documentary shows how a disparate group of scientists had been forced to launch their own investigation into the origins of Covid-19. They discovered that the Wuhan team had been working with a virus in 2013 that is the closest ever found to Sars-Cov-2.

That virus had been discovered in [horseshoe bats](#) living in a mineshaft in Mojiang, Yunnan, China, in 2013. The same mineshaft was also associated with a severe pneumonia-like illness in miners in 2012, which killed three people.

Professor Nikolai Petrovsky, director of endocrinology at Flinders Medical Centre in Australia, told filmmakers he had established that Covid-19 had emerged already perfectly adapted to infect humans.

His team used computer models to test which species the virus bound to most strongly, and found it was humans. He believes the ancestor of the virus may have been grown in human cells or humanised mice and over multiple generations evolved to infect humans, before escaping.

Prof Petrovsky said that the way coronavirus spread so quickly around the world, without initially needing to mutate, was highly unusual.

The programme, Did Covid Leak from a Lab in China?, will be broadcast at 10.15pm on Sunday.



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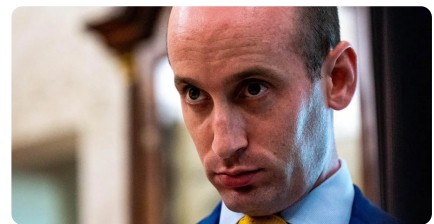
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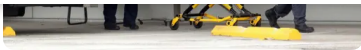


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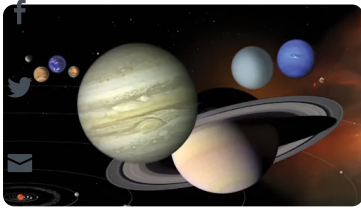
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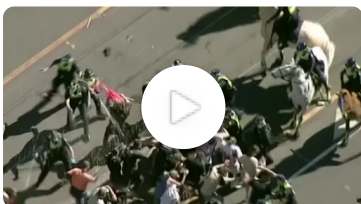
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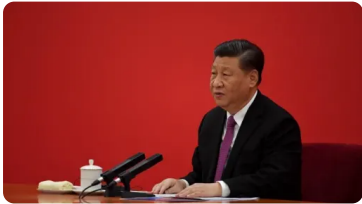


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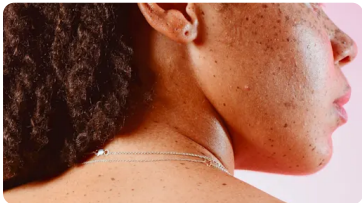


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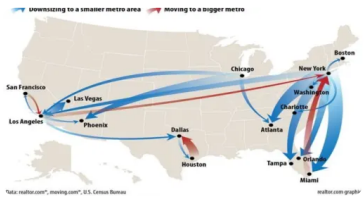
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