

EXCLUSIVE: COVID-19 'has NO credible natural ancestor' and WAS created by Chinese scientists who then tried to cover their tracks with 'retro-engineering' to make it seem like it naturally arose from bats, explosive new study claims

By Josh Boswell For Dailymail.com
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- An explosive new study claims researchers found 'unique fingerprints' in COVID-19 samples that they say could only have arisen from manipulation in a laboratory
- DailyMail.com exclusively obtained the new 22-page paper authored by British Professor Angus Dalgleish and Norwegian scientist Dr. Birger Sørensen set to be published in the Quarterly Review of Biophysics Discovery
- The study showed there's evidence to suggest Chinese scientists created the virus

while working on a Gain of Function project in a Wuhan lab

- **Gain of Function research, which was temporarily outlawed in the US, involves altering naturally-occurring viruses to make them more infectious in order to study their potential effects on humans**
- **According to the paper, Chinese scientists took a natural coronavirus 'backbone' found in Chinese cave bats and spliced onto it a new 'spike', turning it into the deadly and highly transmissible COVID-19**
- **The researchers, who concluded that COVID-19 'has no credible natural ancestor', also believe scientists reverse-engineered versions of the virus to cover up their tracks**
- **'We think that there have been retro-engineered viruses created,' Dalglish told DailyMail.com. 'They've changed the virus, then tried to make out it was in a sequence years ago.'**
- **The study also points to 'deliberate destruction, concealment or contamination of data' in Chinese labs and notes that 'scientists who wished to share their findings haven't been able to do so or have disappeared'**
- **Until recently, most experts had staunchly denied the origins of the virus were anything other than a natural infection leaping from animals to humans**
- **Earlier this week, Dr. Anthony Fauci defended US funding of the Wuhan Institute of Virology, saying the \$600,000 grant was not approved for Gain of Function research**

An explosive new study claims that Chinese scientists created COVID-19 in a Wuhan lab, then tried to cover their tracks by reverse-engineering versions of the virus to make it look like it evolved naturally from bats.

The paper's authors, British Professor Angus Dalglish and Norwegian scientist Dr. Birger Sørensen, wrote that they have had 'prima facie evidence of retro-engineering in [China](#)' for a year - but were ignored by academics and major journals.

Dalglish is a professor of oncology at St George's University, [London](#), and is best known for his breakthrough creating the first working 'HIV vaccine', to treat diagnosed patients and allow them to go off medication for months.

Sørensen, a virologist, is chair of pharmaceutical company, Immunor, which developed a [coronavirus](#) vaccine candidate called Biovacc-19. Dalglish also has share options in the firm.

The shocking allegations in the study include accusations of 'deliberate destruction, concealment or contamination of data' at Chinese labs, and it notes the silencing and disappearance of scientists in the communist country who spoke out.

The journal article, exclusively obtained by DailyMail.com and slated for publication in the coming days, is set to make waves among the scientific community, as the majority of experts have until recently staunchly denied the origins of COVID-19 were anything other than a natural infection leaping from animals to humans.

While China has tried to insist the virus originated elsewhere, academics, politicians and the media have begun to contemplate the possibility it escaped from the WIV - raising suspicions that Chinese officials simply hid evidence of the early spread

While analyzing COVID-19 samples last year in an attempt to create a vaccine, Dagleish and Sørensen discovered 'unique fingerprints' in the virus that they say could only have arisen from manipulation in a laboratory.

They said they tried to publish their findings but were rejected by major scientific journals which were at the time resolute that the virus jumped naturally from bats or other animals to humans.

Even when former MI6 chief Sir Richard Dearlove spoke out publicly saying the scientists' theory should be investigated, the idea was dismissed as 'fake news.'

Over a year later, leading academics, politicians and the media finally flipped, and have begun to contemplate the possibility that COVID-19 escaped from the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China - a lab where experiments included manipulating viruses to increase their infectiousness in order to study their potential effects on humans.

This week, President Joe Biden ordered the intelligence community to re-examine how the virus originated, including the lab accident theory.

The announcement followed the revelation that a previously undisclosed intelligence report had been made to the White House, claiming that several researchers at the Wuhan institute were hospitalized with illness in November 2019. The document was uncovered this week by the Wall Street Journal.

US health officials have also come under fire for allegedly funding researchers' controversial and risky experiments at the Wuhan lab.

DailyMail.com exclusively obtained the 22-page paper which is set to be published in the scientific journal Quarterly Review of Biophysics Discovery. In it, researchers describe their months-long 'forensic analysis' into experiments done at the Wuhan lab between 2002 and 2019

A 'GenBank' table included in the paper lists various coronavirus strains, with the dates they were collected and then when they were submitted to the gene bank, showing a delay of several years for some

One diagram of the coronavirus shows six 'fingerprints' identified by the two scientists, which they say show the virus must have been made in a lab

A second diagram showed how a row of four amino acids found on the SARS-Cov-2 spike have a

The study concluded 'SARS-Coronavirus-2 has no credible natural ancestor' and that it is 'beyond reasonable doubt' that the virus was created through 'laboratory manipulation'

The study claims that scientists at the Wuhan lab (pictured) working on Gain of Function projects took a natural coronavirus 'backbone' found in Chinese cave bats and spliced onto it a new 'spike', turning it into the deadly and highly transmissible COVID-19

During a Senate hearing on Wednesday, White House chief medical advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci admitted he was not certain US funding for researchers at the Wuhan lab was not spent on controversial and risky Gain of Function experiments.

Conflicting studies on the origins of COVID-19

Dagleish and Sorensen's explosive claims have been a matter of controversy since they first put forward their hypothesis last summer, and the scientific community is still split over the likely origins of the virus.

27 scientists published a statement in The Lancet on February 19 last year saying they 'strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that covid-19 does not have a natural origin' and asserted that experts 'overwhelmingly conclude that this coronavirus originated in wildlife' – though three authors later backtracked

A group of prominent scientists wrote in leading journal Nature on March 17, 2020 that 'the evidence shows that SARSCoV-2 is not a purposefully manipulated virus,' and that 'we do not believe that any type of laboratory-based scenario is plausible'

In an unorthodox move, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued a public statement on April 30 last year that 'The Intelligence Community also concurs with the wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 virus was not manmade or genetically modified'

But dissenting voices have started to appear, pointing to evidence that COVID-19 in fact originated from a Wuhan lab:

In November last year, a paper by bioengineer Rossana Segreto and geneticist Yuri Deigin conceded that 'the genetic structure of SARS-CoV-2 does not rule out a laboratory origin' and noted features of the virus that 'might be the result of lab manipulation techniques such as site-directed mutagenesis'

The same month, David Relman, a Stanford University microbiologist who has worked on biosecurity initiatives for the government, wrote a journal article for the National Academy of Scientists that the 'origin story' for covid-19 is 'missing many key details', including a plausible history of the virus and explanation of how the first human got infected

Earlier this month, 18 prominent scientists published a letter in the top journal Science, calling for a new investigation into the origins of the virus, adding that 'theories of accidental release from a lab and zoonotic spillover both remain viable'

'How do you know they didn't lie to you and use the money for gain of function research anyway?' Louisiana Senator John Kennedy asked Fauci.

'You never know,' he replied, but added that scientists at the lab are 'trustworthy'.

National Institutes of Health director Dr. Francis Collins told the hearing that US-funded scientists at the lab 'were not approved by NIH for doing gain of function research.'

In another striking claim contained in the research paper, Dalglish and Sørensen say they have evidence that after the pandemic began, Chinese scientists took samples of the COVID-19 virus and 'retro-engineered' it, making it appear as if it had evolved naturally.

They said they were suspicious of a raft of new strains suddenly entered into gene databases by predominantly Chinese scientists early in 2020, years after they were recorded as being collected.

'We think that there have been retro-engineered viruses created,' Dalglish told DailyMail.com. 'They've changed the virus, then tried to make out it was in a sequence years ago.'

In their paper, Dalglish and Sørensen also pointed to 'deliberate destruction, concealment or contamination of data' in Chinese labs and noted that 'Chinese scientists who wished to share their knowledge have not been able to do so or have disappeared.'

'It appears that preserved virus material and related information have been destroyed. Therefore we are confronted with large gaps in data which may never be filled,' they wrote.

'Strains 'popped up' after January 2020 are not credible... For a year we have possessed prima facie evidence of retro-engineering in China in early 2020.'

In January last year DailyMail.com revealed that scientists had been warning about the risk of deadly pathogens escaping from the Wuhan lab since it was opened in 2017.

China installed the first of a planned five to seven biolabs designed for maximum safety in Wuhan in 2017, for the purpose of studying the most high-risk pathogens, including the Ebola and the SARS viruses.

Tim Trevan, a Maryland biosafety consultant, told the science journal Nature that year, when the lab was on the cusp of opening, that he worried that China's culture could make the institute unsafe because 'structures where everyone feels free to speak up and openness of information are important.'

In fact, the SARS virus had 'escaped' multiple times from a lab in Beijing, according to the Nature article.

US State Department officials visited the Wuhan institute in 2018 and sent two official warnings back to DC alerting the government to poor safety there, according to the Washington Post.

Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory, housed at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, was China's first lab to be rated biosafety level 4, the most secure classification.

But Sørensen said that he believes the virus escaped from lower security areas of the institute, where he believes Gain of Function research was performed.

'We have seen lab leaks and we know it's happening. We also know from the reports we've seen, that coronavirus is worked on in Biosafety Level 2 or 3 labs. If they do Gain of Function in such labs, what do you expect?' he said.

In February 2020 a molecular biomechanics researcher at South China University of Technology, Botao Xiao, published a paper claiming 'the killer coronavirus probably originated

from a laboratory in Wuhan,' highlighting safety issues at the institute.

How Dagleish and Sørensen's explosive claims were ignored by academics and major journals for a year

Dagleish and Sørensen's explosive claims have been highly controversial since they first put forward their hypothesis of a man-made virus last summer.

In June 2020, after Dagleish and Sørensen's theory was championed by a former MI6 chief, the Times of London quoted MI5 sources dismissing the theory as 'fake news.'

Gunnveig Grødeland, a vaccine researcher at the University of Oslo, told Forbes in June last year that the parts of the virus that Dagleish and Sorensen believe must be man-made, in fact appear in nature.

'Examples can be found in other viruses including subtypes of influenza (including 'bird flu'), HIV, and several human coronaviruses (MERS, OC43, HKU1),' she said.

Dr Rachael Tarlinton, an associate professor of veterinary virology at the UK University of Nottingham, told Sky News that Dagleish and Sorensen's theory was 'magical thinking' in a July 2020 interview.

'The artificial release theories seem to be a form of 'magical thinking' - a simplistic solution to a complex problem where if someone can be blamed then that someone can be removed and the problem go away,' she said.

One of the two scientists' biggest critics was Professor Kristian Andersen at the department of immunology and microbiology at Scripps research facility in California, who described Dagleish and Sorensen's first paper last summer as 'complete nonsense, unintelligible, and not even remotely scientific.'

Months earlier, a statement published in the Lancet by a group of 27 scientists said: 'We stand together to strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that covid-19 does not have a natural origin.'

The statement, released February 19, 2020, added that scientists 'overwhelmingly conclude that this coronavirus originated in wildlife.'

Three of the authors later backtracked, saying they thought a lab accident was plausible.

A paper by a group of prominent scientists was published in the leading journal Nature on March 17, 2020, co-authored by Professor Andersen, concluding that 'the evidence shows that SARSCoV-2 is not a purposefully manipulated virus,' and that 'we do not believe that any type of laboratory-based scenario is plausible.'

The scientists added that it was 'currently impossible to prove or disprove the other theories of its origin.'

In their new paper, Dagleish and Sorensen criticized Andersen and his colleagues'

conclusions, saying some of the studies the opposing scientists used to back up their claims in fact contradict their own arguments.

A week before the Nature paper was published, Chinese scientist Shi Zhengli, who led a bat coronavirus research group at the Wuhan institute, told Scientific American that she checked the records for mishandling of experimental materials, and said none of the viruses her team sampled from bat caves were among them.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued a statement on April 30 last year saying: 'The Intelligence Community also concurs with the wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 virus was not manmade or genetically modified.'

The director said the intelligence community would 'rigorously examine' whether the virus escaped from the Wuhan lab or whether the first infection arose through contact with infected animals.

Xiao withdrew the paper weeks later after Chinese authorities denied any accidents at the lab.

The same month, a group of 27 scientists wrote a statement in top journal The Lancet, saying they 'strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that covid-19 does not have a natural origin' and 'overwhelmingly conclude that this coronavirus originated in wildlife.'

Dr Anthony Fauci told lawmakers this week that the National Institutes of Health committed \$600,000 to the Chinese lab through a non-profit, to study whether bat coronaviruses - but denied funding went towards Gain of Function research

Three of the authors later told the Wall Street Journal that they now believe a lab accident is worth consideration as an explanation for the origins of covid-19.

Dalgleish told DailyMail.com that he believed resistance to the theory that COVID-19 is a man-made, escaped virus comes from scientists fearful that the revelation would shut down their field.

'This looks like a weak defense to protect the discipline so that this type of genetic engineering will not be interfered with,' he said. 'I make no bones about it. The Gain of Function engineering should have been banned ages ago.'

Questioned at a congressional hearing this week, White House chief medical adviser Dr. Anthony Fauci denied that any US funding went towards Gain of Function research in the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

Fauci told lawmakers that the National Institutes of Health committed \$600,000 to the Chinese lab through the non-profit EcoHealth Alliance, to study whether bat coronaviruses could be transmitted to humans.

NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins also told the hearing that US-funded scientists at the lab 'were not approved by NIH for doing gain of function research'.

'We are, of course, not aware of other sources of funds or other activities they might have undertaken outside of what our approved grant allowed,' he added.

The NIH ceased its funding to the EcoHealth Alliance in April 2020.

Daily Mail has been asking if the virus stemmed from a Wuhan lab since April 2020

The Daily Mail has consistently questioned the consensus that COVID-19 was transmitted from humans to animals.

Our reporters have dug into the details and challenged the assumptions about how the pandemic originated.

APRIL 4, 2020:

[Did coronavirus leak from a research lab in Wuhan? Startling new theory is 'no longer being discounted' amid claims staff 'got infected after being sprayed with blood'](#)

Ministers fear that the coronavirus pandemic might have been caused by a leak from a Chinese laboratory, The Mail on Sunday can reveal.

Senior Government sources say that while 'the balance of scientific advice' is still that the deadly virus was first transmitted to humans from a live animal market in Wuhan, a leak from a laboratory in the Chinese city is 'no longer being discounted'.

One member of Cobra, the emergency committee led by Boris Johnson, said last night that while the latest intelligence did not dispute the virus was 'zoonotic' – originating in animals – it did not rule out that the virus first spread to humans after leaking from a Wuhan laboratory.

APRIL 15, 2020:

[Mike Pompeo demands truth from Beijing as US investigates if COVID-19 escaped from Wuhan lab during experiments and China covered it up by blaming 'wet' food markets](#)

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has demanded that China 'come clean' following reports that coronavirus originated in a Chinese laboratory, not as a bioweapon, but as part of bungling experiments to prove that Chinese scientists were superior to Americans in identifying emerging virus threats.

It comes after President Donald Trump said on Wednesday the U.S. is trying to determine whether the coronavirus first crossed to humans accidentally during experiments with bats at the Wuhan Institute of Virology Lab.

After word of the outbreak finally became public, Chinese leaders were quick to blame Wuhan's 'wet market' where wild animals -- though not bats -- are sold for consumption, leading one source to tell Fox News the debacle is the 'costliest government coverup of all time.'

MAY 2, 2020:

[Wuhan virus lab 'cover-up': Startling photos of scientists wearing little protection as they handle deadly bat samples vanish from website of Chinese institute at the centre of global suspicion over pandemic](#)

Pictures which appear to show slack safety standards at the Chinese laboratory at the centre of international suspicion over [Covid-19](#) have been systematically deleted from its website – as [Donald Trump](#) continues to ramp up the pressure on Beijing over its potential role in the outbreak.

During the past month, Wuhan's Institute of Virology has removed photographs of scientists working in its laboratories and edited out references to visits by US diplomats who subsequently raised the alarm about the laboratory's work on bats.

US President Donald Trump announced on Thursday that he had seen intelligence that gave him a 'high degree of confidence' that the global crisis had its origins in the institute – a month after The Mail on Sunday first revealed that British Cabinet Ministers had received classified briefings raising the possibility of a leak from the institute.

[Downing Street](#) did not take issue with President Trump's remarks. 'There are clearly questions that need to be answered about the origin and spread of the virus,' a spokesman for [Boris Johnson](#) said.

MAY 30, 2020:

[Beijing now admits that coronavirus DIDN'T start in Wuhan's market... so where DID it come from](#)

China has become used to public confessions on television. But this time the words came from one of the nation's top officials and had seismic global implications.

'At first, we assumed the seafood market might have the virus, but now the market is more like a victim,' said Gao Fu, director of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.

Gao's initial analysis had made sense after previous outbreaks of zoonotic viruses (diseases that jump from animals to humans). Yet suspicion grew over the Chinese government's failure to share data from animals sampled in the market following its early cover-ups.

JANUARY 2, 2021:

[China lab leak is the 'most credible' source of the coronavirus outbreak, says top US government official, amid bombshell claims Wuhan scientist has turned whistleblower](#)

One of America's most senior government officials says the most 'credible' theory about the origin of [coronavirus](#) is that it escaped from a laboratory in [China](#).

Matthew Pottinger, who is President [Donald Trump](#)'s respected Deputy National Security Adviser, told politicians from around the world that even China's leaders now openly admit their previous claims that the virus originated in a Wuhan market are false.

Mr Pottinger said that the latest intelligence points to the virus leaking from the top-secret Wuhan Institute of Virology, 11 miles from the market, saying: 'There is a growing body of evidence that the lab is likely the most credible source of the virus.'

JANUARY 9, 2021:

[New cover-up fears as Chinese officials delete critical data about the Wuhan lab with details of 300 studies vanishing - including all those carried out by virologist dubbed Batwoman](#)

The Chinese government is facing fresh accusations of a cover-up after officials deleted crucial online data about the laboratory suspected of being the source of Covid-19.

The Mail on Sunday can reveal that hundreds of pages of information relating to studies carried out by the top-secret Wuhan Institute of Virology have been wiped.

Details of more than 300 studies, including many investigating diseases that pass from animals to humans, published online by the state-run National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) are no longer available.

APRIL 24, 2021:

[Worrying new clues about the origins of Covid: How scientists at Wuhan lab helped Chinese army in secret project to find animal viruses](#)

Scientists studying bat diseases at [China](#)'s maximum-security laboratory in Wuhan were engaged in a massive project to investigate animal viruses alongside leading military officials – despite their denials of any such links.

Documents obtained by [The Mail on Sunday](#) reveal that a nationwide scheme, directed by a leading state body, was launched nine years ago to discover new viruses and detect the 'dark matter' of biology involved in spreading diseases.