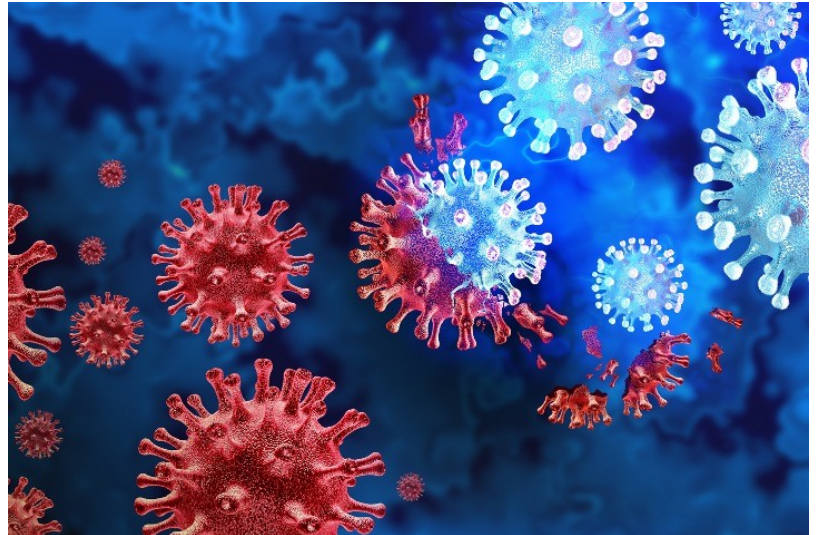




## Senate Report: Covid Virus “Most Likely” Came From Wuhan Lab

A Senate investigation into the origins of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, has concluded that the virus was “most likely” engineered at and then leaked out of a Chinese laboratory.

On Thursday, Republicans on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee released the [interim report](#) that found a lack of evidence supporting the theory that SARS-CoV-2 jumped from animals to humans, and called China’s Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) the likely source of the virus. The report noted,



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While precedent of previous outbreaks of human infections from contact with animals favors the hypothesis that a natural zoonotic spillover is responsible for the origin of SARS-CoV-2, the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 that resulted in the COVID-19 pandemic was most likely the result of a research-related incident.

The report, based on the analysis of publicly available, open-source information, postulates that there are several reasons to conclude that the virus was engineered in Wuhan.

The part of the report titled “Analysis of Research-Related Incident Hypothesis” tracks the “high-risk” coronavirus research projects done by the WIV.

“In the aftermath of the 2002-2004 SARS epidemic, Chinese authorities emphasized research on potential pandemic pathogens, including SARS-related coronaviruses, to develop vaccines and other medical countermeasures with the goal of attempting to predict and prevent the next coronavirus pandemic,” reads the report.

### Special Interest in Viruses With Potential to Infect Humans

As the only biosafety level 4 lab in the country, the WIV has done most of the research related to SARS coronaviruses. For that, WIV scientists collected large amounts of virus samples that were “90.7 to 96.8 percent similar overall to SARS-CoV-2.” In total, “more than 15,000 bat-related samples around the time the pandemic began” were collected. From them, more than 1,400 bat viruses were identified later in the labs.

Once collected, the samples headed to two main campuses of the WIV, with one being a biosafety level 2 lab (BSL2) and the other a level 3 lab. The closest attention was given to the viruses that could bind to human cells. Per the report,

Particular attention was given to SARS-related coronaviruses that have the ability to bind to human ACE2 receptors. These viruses were considered by researchers at the WIV to be



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on October 28, 2022

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potential pandemic pathogens and pose a high-risk for spillover into humans. Viruses were then sequenced and evaluated for their potential pandemic risk.

To see how much risk these viruses pose, the Chinese lab workers then performed “genetic recombination experiments as part of [the lab’s] coronavirus research,” meaning, the parts of the collected viruses were mixed and matched.

“The WIV also conducted transgenic humanized mice experiments to assess the pandemic potential of SARS-related viruses. They also tested the efficacy of vaccines in these mice and other animal species,” found Republican investigators.

### **Unsafe Labs**

The problem is, such experiments “generate highly-infectious aerosols” that are described as “ubiquitous” and “difficult to detect,” according to the report.

At the time, there were no established safety regulations for the BSL2, which potentially created a high risk of incidents.

Moreover, as appears from the report, the higher-safety labs “struggled to maintain key biosafety capabilities” as well. At some point in 2019, the leadership of the WIV had to conduct a “series” of internal meetings to discuss the issue and conduct safety training.

The situation with safety was so dire that in November 2019, representatives of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in Beijing had to relay “important oral and written instructions” to address the “complex and grave situation facing [bio]security work.”

WIV patents and procurements of special equipment, such as an air incinerator and an air disinfection system, observed by the investigators suggest that China’s “coronavirus research hub” experienced persistent biosafety problems.

In March 2018, the WIV, along with other “research entities,” approached the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) of the Department of Defense, which is working on the development of emerging technologies for use by the military, with a grant proposal. In it, they described “the WIV’s intent to search for SARS-related coronaviruses with the potential to bind to human ACE2 receptors.” DARPA rejected it.

However, as [reported previously by Project Veritas](#) and confirmed in the Senate report, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) granted the WIV to research SARS coronaviruses that “caused severe illness” in humanized mice. Per the report,

Shi Zhengli, a senior scientist at the WIV and SARS-related coronavirus expert, disclosed that her team infected civets and mice that expressed human ACE2 receptors with chimeric SARS-related coronaviruses. The results of these experiments indicated that SARS-related bat coronaviruses could infect and cause severe illness in humanized mice.

Notably, the depository of data on viral sequences collected at the WIV that had been available to the public was permanently taken down in February 2020.

### **Zoonotic Origin Unlikely**

The report also analyzes the shortcomings of the hypothesis of a “natural” zoonotic spillover of SARS-



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CoV-2, noting that the epidemiological characteristics of the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak dramatically differ from previous spillovers.

For example, there is still no evidence of an animal being infected with the virus in question, or even a closely related virus, prior to the 2019 outbreak. Normally, both animals and humans that get infected first develop antibodies to the virus. That is not the case with SARS-CoV-2. Moreover, as opposed to all previous coronavirus outbreaks, “there is no evidence that any animal was infected with SARS-CoV-2 prior to the first human cases.”

Also in contrast to previous outbreaks, people in only one location — Wuhan — were infected.

While the report suggests that the conclusions are not “definitive,” the evidence cited puts pressure on Democrats and President Joe Biden to pressure China for full transparency surrounding the WIV.

In June, the White House [declined](#) to say whether Biden pushed China’s President Xi Jinping to cooperate on investigations into Covid origins.

In May, Biden [ordered](#) the U.S. intelligence community to “redouble efforts” to investigate the origins of Covid. With the efficacy of previous efforts being negative, not surprisingly, the result of their intensified efforts was inconclusive, with the intelligence community [remaining split](#) on the hypotheses.

Not so long ago, the “lab leak theory” was ridiculed as a wild and “debunked” “conspiracy theory.” To take a trip down the memory hole, please watch this well-made mashup below featuring legacy media anchors, public health officials, and politicians.



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