



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on September 21, 2022

Virologist Who “Debunked” Lab-leak Theory Worked on Gain-of-function Research at Wuhan Lab

A virologist cited in major media and online “fact checks” to cast doubt on the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) lab-leak theory of Covid-19 turns out to have been part of a gain-of-function research project at WIV funded by both the United States and China.

According to investigative reporter Paul Thacker’s Substack newsletter, [The Disinformation Chronicle](#), virologist Danielle Anderson first came to prominence among lab-leak “debunkers” in February 2020, when she wrote a [Health Feedback “fact check” analysis](#) of a [New York Post article](#) positing the lab-leak theory. That article pointed out that WIV is “China’s only Level 4 microbiology lab that is equipped to handle deadly coronaviruses” and that “the People’s Liberation Army’s top expert in biological warfare, a Maj. Gen. Chen Wei, was dispatched to Wuhan at the end of January to help with the effort to contain the outbreak.”



Akarawut Lohacharoenvanich/iStock/Getty Images Plus

In her analysis, Anderson called the *Post* article “infuriating” and “appalling.” She suggested that nothing out of the ordinary was occurring at WIV and denied the *Post*’s claim that Chen Wei was “the People’s Liberation Army’s top expert in biological warfare.”

“I have worked in this exact laboratory at various times for the past 2 years,” she asserted. “I can personally attest to the strict control and containment measures implemented while working there. The staff at WIV are incredibly competent, hardworking, and are excellent scientists with superb track records.”

What Anderson did *not* disclose is that she was, in fact, working on gain-of-function research under a [grant](#) from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to Peter Daszak of the EcoHealth Alliance. “The grant’s biosketch lists Anderson’s other funding sources, which includes a grant from the Chinese Academy of Sciences — yes, the science institution run by the Chinese Communist Party,” noted Thacker.

In addition, he wrote, Anderson is known to have worked with Linfa Wang of the Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore, whose “collaborations with researchers at the WIV on gain of function studies, as well as the WIV’s ties to the Chinese military and extensive linkages to the Chinese Communist Party,” were [revealed](#) last year. Daszak’s [2018 grant application](#) to the Pentagon’s Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) for the same type of research, which DARPA wisely rejected, proposed Linfa



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Wang as Anderson's immediate superior. The two also co-authored (with two other scientists) a [February 2020 *Lancet* article](#) in which they decried the use of such terms as "Wuhan virus" and "China virus" and declared, "Now is not a time for blame." (Daszak himself was also [quite busy](#) diverting attention from WIV, recruiting scientists to sign a letter to the *Lancet* denouncing the lab-leak theory and getting himself appointed the sole U.S.-based representative on the World Health Organization's team investigating the origin of Covid-19.)

Even as the evidence for the lab-leak theory began to mount, Anderson continued denying it publicly. In August 2020, she "[published a preprint](#) that attempted to place blame for the transmission of COVID-19 on frozen foods," wrote Thacker. "Although Anderson [retracted the preprint](#) shortly after publishing it, the conclusions miraculously appeared in a joint World Health Organization and China [report on](#) the origins of the pandemic."

By 2021, even mainstream media like [The Washington Post](#) were calling for investigations of WIV. "As demands for transparency began to pile up," observed Thacker, "Anderson refashioned herself in the summer of 2021 as the last foreigner in Wuhan and the victim of an online harassment campaign by 'conspiracy theorists.'" Glowing reports by [Bloomberg](#), [Newsweek](#), [Nature](#), and other outlets portrayed her as a disinterested scientist who was forced to keep her opinions to herself out of fear for her life.

"Anderson hasn't sought public attention, especially since being targeted by U.S. extremists in early 2020 after she exposed false information about the pandemic posted online," reported Bloomberg.

Through all of this, penned Thacker, "Anderson's involvement in [Daszak's gain-of-function] grants was not revealed by any of the fact checkers nor any media outlet that interviewed her, which chose instead to morph the financially conflicted virologist into a 'conspiracy buster.'" (See also: Fauci, Anthony.)

Thacker's conclusion: "When fact-checkers hide their own facts, and thus cow inexpert reporters into avoiding uncomfortable subjects, actual inquiry into the truth begins to die a slow death."





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