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Dr. Fauci Backed Controversial Wuhan Lab with U.S. Dollars for Risky Coronavirus Research

BY **FRED GUTERL** ON 4/28/20 AT 2:57 PM EDT

Speaking: David Azzerad

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Dr. Anthony Fauci is an adviser to President Donald Trump and something of an American folk hero for his steady, calm leadership during the pandemic crisis. At least one poll shows that Americans trust Fauci more than Trump on the coronavirus pandemic—and few scientists are portrayed on TV by Brad Pitt.

But just last year, the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the organization led by Dr. Fauci, funded scientists at the Wuhan Institute of Virology and other institutions for work on gain-of-function research on bat coronaviruses.

In 2019, with the backing of NIAID, the National Institutes of Health committed \$3.7 million over six years for research that included some gain-of-function work. The program followed another \$3.7 million, 5-year project for collecting and studying bat coronaviruses, which ended in 2019, bringing the total to \$7.4 million.

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Many scientists have criticized gain of function research, which involves

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because it creates a risk of starting a pandemic from accidental release.

SARS-CoV-2 , the virus now causing a global pandemic, is believed to have originated in bats. U.S. intelligence, after originally asserting that the coronavirus had occurred naturally, conceded last month that the pandemic may have originated in a leak from the Wuhan lab. (At this point most scientists say it's possible—but not likely—that the pandemic virus was engineered or manipulated.)

Dr. Fauci did not respond to *Newsweek's* requests for comment. NIH responded with a statement that said in part: "Most emerging human viruses come from wildlife, and these represent a significant threat to public health and biosecurity in the US and globally, as demonstrated by the SARS epidemic of 2002-03, and the current COVID-19 pandemic.... scientific research indicates that there is no evidence that suggests the virus was created in a laboratory."

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The NIH research consisted of two parts. The first part began in 2014 and involved surveillance of bat coronaviruses, and had a

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budget of \$3.7 million. The program funded Shi Zheng-Li, a virologist at the Wuhan lab, and other researchers to investigate and catalogue bat coronaviruses in the wild. This

part of the project was completed in 2019.

A second phase of the project, beginning that year, included additional surveillance work but also gain-of-function research for the purpose of understanding how bat coronaviruses could mutate to attack humans. The project was run by EcoHealth Alliance, a non-profit research group, under the direction of President Peter Daszak, an expert on disease ecology. NIH canceled the project just this past Friday, April 24th, *Politico* reported. Daszak did not immediately respond to *Newsweek* requests for comment.

The project proposal states: "We will use S protein sequence data, infectious clone technology, in vitro and in vivo infection experiments and analysis of receptor binding to test the hypothesis that % divergence thresholds in S protein sequences predict spillover potential."

In layman's terms, "spillover potential" refers to the ability of a virus to jump from animals to humans, which requires that the virus be able to attach to receptors in the cells of humans. SARS-CoV-2, for instance, is adept at binding to the ACE2 receptor in human lungs and other organs.

According to Richard Ebright, an infectious disease expert at Rutgers University, the project description refers to experiments that would enhance the ability of bat coronavirus to infect human cells and laboratory animals using techniques of genetic engineering. In the wake of the pandemic, that is a noteworthy detail.

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Ebright, along with many other scientists, has been a vocal opponent of gain-of-function research because of the risk it presents of creating a pandemic through accidental release from a lab.

Dr. Fauci is renowned for his work on the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1990s. Born in Brooklyn, he graduated first in his class from Cornell University Medical College in 1966. As head of NIAID since 1984, he has served as an adviser to every U.S. president since Ronald Reagan.

A decade ago, during a controversy over gain-of-function research on bird-flu viruses, Dr. Fauci played an important role in promoting the work. He argued that the research was worth the risk it entailed because it enables scientists to make preparations, such as investigating possible anti-viral medications, that could be useful if and when a pandemic occurred.

The work in question was a type of gain-of-function research that involved taking wild viruses and passing them through live animals until they mutate into a form that could pose a pandemic threat. Scientists used it to take a virus that was poorly transmitted among humans and make it into one that was highly transmissible—a hallmark of a pandemic virus. This work was done by infecting a

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series of ferrets, allowing the virus to mutate until a ferret that hadn't been deliberately infected contracted the disease.

The work entailed risks that worried even seasoned researchers. More than 200 scientists called for the work to be halted. The problem, they said, is that it increased the likelihood that a pandemic would occur through a laboratory accident.

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Dr. Fauci defended the work. "[D]etermining the molecular Achilles' heel of these viruses can allow scientists to identify novel antiviral drug targets that could be used to prevent infection in those at risk or to better treat those who become infected," wrote Fauci and two co-authors in the *Washington Post* on December 30, 2011. "Decades of experience tells us that disseminating information gained through biomedical research to legitimate

scientists and health officials provides a critical foundation for generating appropriate countermeasures and ultimately protecting the public health "

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Nevertheless, in 2014, under pressure from the Obama administration, the National Institute of Health instituted a moratorium on the work, suspending 21 studies.

Three years later, though—in December 2017—the NIH ended the moratorium and the second phase of the NIAID project, which included the gain-of-function research, began. The NIH established a framework for determining how the research would go forward: scientists have to get approval from a panel of experts, who would decide whether the risks were justified.

The reviews were indeed conducted—but in secret, for which the NIH has drawn criticism. In early 2019, after a reporter for *Science* magazine discovered that the NIH had approved two influenza research projects that used gain of function methods, scientists who oppose this kind of research excoriated the NIH in an editorial in the *Washington Post*.

"We have serious doubts about whether these experiments should be conducted at all," wrote Tom Inglesby of Johns Hopkins University and Marc Lipsitch of Harvard. "[W]ith deliberations kept behind closed doors, none of us will have the opportunity to understand how the government arrived at these decisions or to

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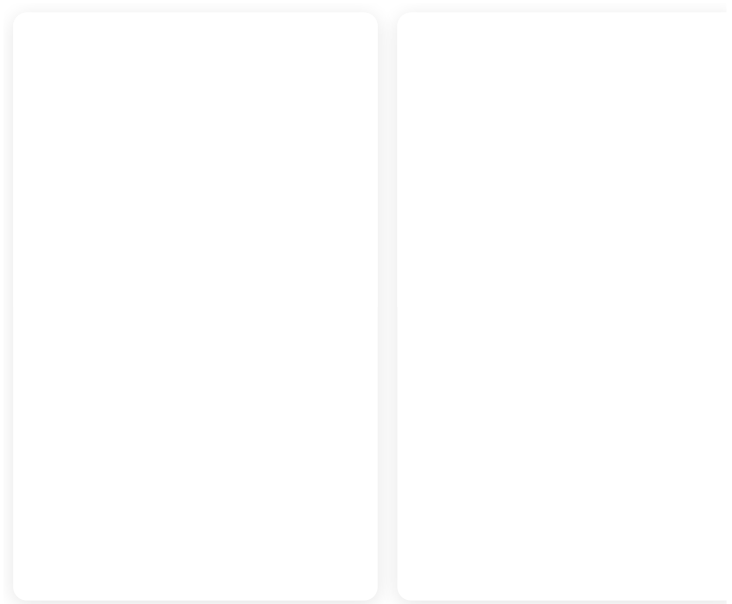
Correction 5/5, 6:20 p.m.: *The headline of this story has been corrected to reflect that the Wuhan lab received only a part of the millions of U.S. dollars allocated for virus research.*

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P PurpleQuill 

30 April, 2020

May be the most courageous and important piece of journalism in American history, if it brings this madness to a grinding halt. Newsweek has pierced the darkness in the best tradition of reporting of past. Traitors to America have brought us to our knees. Who will convene the first congressional committee hearing? Subpoenas, names, testimony under oath. Send this to every single congressman so he/she cannot claim ignorance when the reckoning begins. We certainly have plenty of time as our lives fritter away in our lock-down cells. *(Edited)*

Reply  105  6

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George Kafantaris 

29 April, 2020

We cannot duplicate an experiment if we have no record of how we did it in the first place. As such, detailed notes are essential to any research. Since the "gain-of-function" research at the Wuhan lab was undoubtedly done in a scientific manner, there should be a detailed record of all the experiments, including who did them and what animals they used -- as well as the fate of these animals and the researchers themselves.

Moreover, there should be record of the insights they gained in dealing with novel viruses -- which was the underlying purpose of their research. These insights should now be shared with the world that is struggling to deal with COVID-19.

Reply  16 

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Caroline Gann 

1 May, 2020

The article says, ***"He argued that the research was worth the risk it entailed because it enables scientists to make preparations, such as investigating possible anti-viral medications, that could be useful if and when a pandemic occurred."*** Does anyone else see the ridiculous contradiction in that!

Let's break down that theory shall we...

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That will be useful if and when a pandemic occurs from **a virus that does not yet exist! See more**

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OlivePin

30 April, 2020

I'm surprised Newsweek put this truth out there! Professor Francis Boyle blew this whistle 2 months ago, was considered a "conspiracy theory" but is now finally being brought to light by mainstream sources! *(Edited)*

Reply 96 3

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OrangeUmbrella

28 April, 2020

So Dr. Fauci thought that scientists from China, the country that brought us toxic toothpaste, toys with choking hazards and lead paint, contaminated pet food, tainted seafood, and shoddy tire treads could be trusted with handling pandemic-causing viruses? If there is anyone with blood on his hands, it is Dr. Fauci.

Reply 914 49

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OrangeSushi

29 April, 2020

Why create something so dangerous that could be accidentally leaked on the population? The article mentions something about therapeutics but the risk is way too grave. Why trust a communist country that treats it citizens terribly with this kind of hazardous situation? Makes no sense, unless you are into population control.

Reply 101 3

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dina

29 April, 2020

I read that Dr. Fauci has said that as a young doctor he was motivated to find cures to diseases that if left untreated would definitely be fatal to the patient - it would seem noble, but to me it sounds less of a desire to heal - to observe health returning to the ill- and more the desire to be the decisive factor. In short, wanting to play God. If the article is correct, creating the disease and it's cure is even more of a power play. He might believe that he is serving a good purpose, but where there is power, perversion follows. Thank you Newsweek and Fred Guterl for an

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[↩ Show 2 more replies](#)**B BlueTooth**

30 April, 2020

Now lets ask this question. If Dr. Fauci did this research, which I know he did because I have been researching this as well. His research was for "treatment" with antiviral meds to treat coronaviruses. Well, if you look back at 2003 SARS...the patent states the treatment was Hydroxychloroquine!!! Why would Dr Fauci then say during a briefing that we needed to have a study for this drug? Aslo, the man should have known in the beginning what antivirals would help, right? Now all the sudden he (Dr Fauci) is touting Remdesivir (which is very expensive compared to HCQ). Why? Should we ask the question, "Who is invested in this medication"? And lets look who now has the Patent for Remdesivir...Wuhan Virology Instittute? And should we look who has an interest into that Institute? I think the rabbit hole goes deep.... *(Edited)*

Reply  143  4[↩ Show 1 more reply](#)**J JesseMorrell**

29 April, 2020

Thank you for publishing this article! I've been researching this for two weeks and have a very detailed timeline for the Wuhan Lab and Dr. Fauci's involvement! I can share it with you if you like!

Also, your article said Phase 1 was to find and catalog all the viruses. True. But it also involved Gain of Function Experiments - even during the years it was illegal under Obama.

Notice the first grant said:

"Predictive models of host range (i.e. emergence potential) will be tested experimentally using reverse genetics, pseudovirus and receptor binding assays, and virus infection experiments across a range of cell cultures from different species and humanized mice."

The reverse genetics and pseudoviruses for receptor binding and infection experiments is Gain of Function Research.

Reply  464  9[↩ Show 42 more replies](#)**R RedCandy**

30 April, 2020

Yeah and the new drug Fauci's claiming is "the new standard of care" (for now) Remdesivir owned by Soros.

In short, we have George Soros in league with corporate patent-holders to the only known coronavirus treatment (treat after infection) at the same time Bill Gates holds a patent on a

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and gaudy respective levels of personal wealth and through different vectors congruent with the same pandemic? All partnering with China and also making money off pandemic bonds and who knows what else while they crash the economy.

Reply  65  4

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