

\$125 Million Just Poured Into GOF Lab Leak Research

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced a \$125 million grant to Washington State University to detect "emerging viruses." Viruses that have not yet "emerged" are those that are manipulated in the lab, aka gain-of-function research
- › There are 12 partner countries focusing on unknown pathogens from three families, which include coronaviruses (COVID-19), filoviruses (Ebola) and paramyxoviruses (measles and Nipah)
- › Documents released following a Freedom of Information Act request showed gain-of-function research was performed on two types of coronaviruses to boost pathogenicity and statements from the NIH and NIAID directors before Congress were lies
- › The August 1, 2021, addendum to the House Foreign Affairs Committee report showed SARS-CoV-2 was released in Wuhan in September and spread through the world using athletes from the 2019 Military Games held in Wuhan in October 2019
- › Some GOP members are calling for the head of the NIAID to resign or to be fired; Sen. Rand Paul has referred the director's actions to the Department of Justice for an investigation on possible perjury charges

In early 2020, as scientists were analyzing the SARS-CoV-2 virus, it was theorized the virulence and infectivity could be explained by gain-of-function research. Months of lab analyses and political arguments ensued over whether the virus was leaked from the lab or developed naturally in the wild.

Despite public outcry and denials from top health experts that the virus was created, the preponderance of the evidence indicates the virus was manipulated in the lab.¹ Then, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), publicly announced October 5, 2021, they would grant Washington State University \$125 million “to detect emerging viruses.”²

This is far greater than the \$7.4 million Newsweek³ reported was granted to the NIAID for gain-of-function work on bat coronavirus in Wuhan, China. Dr. Kanta Subbarao is from the Laboratory of Infectious Disease at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).⁴

According to Subbarao, these experiments “are routine virological methods” and “emphasized that such experiments in virology are fundamental to understanding the biology, ecology and pathogenesis of viruses and added that much basic knowledge is still lacking for SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV.”

Historically, the NIH had funded gain-of-function research, but this was paused in October 2014. December 19, 2017, the NIH announced they would lift the funding pause on gain-of-function research and stated:⁵

“We have a responsibility to ensure that research with infectious agents is conducted responsibly, and that we consider the potential biosafety and biosecurity risks associated with such research.”

As Newsweek reported, the “second phase of the project, beginning that year [2019], 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 nonprofit research group, under the direction of president Peter Daszak.”⁶

After months of public and political debate, argument and division, the U.S. government agency USAID stepped into the spotlight again and awarded millions to a university “to make sure the world is better prepared.”⁷

University Accepts \$125 Million for Gain-of-Function Research

Washington State University published a press release⁸ October 5, 2021, announcing they had been awarded \$125 million from USAID. Called a “cooperative agreement,” the university is heading up a new five-year global project in which they have been asked to⁹ “... detect and characterize unknown viruses which have the potential to spill over from wildlife and domestic animals to human populations.”

The project will partner with 12 countries throughout Africa, Latin America and Asia. The idea is to carry out animal surveillance within the country’s borders using their facilities. USAID announced the project “to detect unknown viruses with pandemic potential” as part of Discovery & Exploration of Emerging Pathogens Viral Zoonoses (DEEP VZN).¹⁰

The organization believes that SARS-CoV-2 has demonstrated how infectious diseases threaten society. This is especially true of viruses that have been manipulated to increase virulence and infectivity in humans.¹¹ The goal of the project is to collect over 800,000 samples over five years from wildlife and then determine the zoonotic potential of these viruses.¹²

“The project will focus on finding previously unknown pathogens from three viral families that have a large potential for viral spillover from animals to humans: coronaviruses, the family that includes SARS-CoV-2 the virus that causes COVID-19; filoviruses, such as the Ebola virus; and paramyxoviruses which includes the viruses that cause measles and Nipah.”

Ebola virus was first discovered in 1976 and has since led to several deadly outbreaks in African countries. The CDC¹³ writes that scientists do not know where Ebola virus comes from. However, the virus can spread through direct contact with body fluids and tissues of infected animals.

Nipah was first discovered in 1999¹⁴ and the first outbreak resulted in 300 human cases and more than 100 deaths. The animal host is believed to be the fruit bat that can spread the disease to animals and humans. The infection also spreads from person to

person and can range from mild to severe. Up to 70% of those infected between 1998 and 2018 have died.

The project expects to find between 8,000 and 12,000 new viruses, “which researchers will then screen and sequence the genomes of the ones that pose the most risk to animal and human health.”¹⁵ In case this sounds familiar, as *Breaking Points* anchor emphasizes, this has been “code” for gain-of-function research,¹⁶ or detecting viruses that have not yet “emerged.”

Documents Reveal Virus Was Manipulated to Increase Virulence

An ongoing Freedom of Information Act litigation brought by *The Intercept*¹⁷ against the NIH resulted in the release of over 900 pages of previously undisclosed documents that detailed the work of EcoHealth Alliance as a subcontractor of gain-of-function research on bat coronavirus through the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

It’s important to note that the moratorium on federal funding of gain-of-function research instituted in 2014 was initiated on the heels of a high-profile lab mishap at the CDC and controversial experiments over deadly bird flu virus that was manipulated to be more contagious.¹⁸

Reportedly, the goal was to determine if bird flu could mutate in the wild and start a pandemic. David Relman, a microbiologist from Stanford University, stated the obvious when he said,¹⁹ “I don’t think it’s wise or appropriate for us to create large risks that don’t already exist.”

The new documents released under the FOIA request by *The Intercept* contained previously unpublished proposals by the NIAID and updates to the EcoHealth Alliance’s research. As reported in *The Intercept*,²⁰

“The documents contain several critical details about the research in Wuhan, including the fact that key experimental work with humanized mice was conducted at a biosafety level 3 lab at Wuhan University Center for Animal

Experiment – and not at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, as was previously assumed.

The documents raise additional questions about the theory that the pandemic may have begun in a lab accident, an idea that Daszak has aggressively dismissed.”

According to The Intercept, Richard Ebright, molecular biologist at Rutgers University, also reviewed the documents released in the FOIA. He told The Intercept that the documents contained vital information about the research being conducted in the Wuhan lab. He wrote:²¹

“The viruses they constructed were tested for their ability to infect mice that were engineered to display human type receptors on their cell. While they were working on SARS-related coronavirus, they were carrying out a parallel project at the same time on MERS-related coronavirus.”

In other words, the lab was doing parallel research on two types of coronaviruses that were able to infect humanized mice. In a series of posts on Twitter, Ebright goes on to say:²²

*“The materials further reveal for the first time that one of the resulting novel, laboratory-generated SARS-related coronaviruses – one not been previously disclosed publicly – was more pathogenic to humanized mice than the starting virus from which it was constructed ... and thus not only was reasonably anticipated to exhibit enhanced pathogenicity, but, indeed, was *demonstrated* to exhibit enhanced pathogenicity.*

The documents make it clear that assertions by the NIH Director, Francis Collins, and the NIAID Director, Anthony Fauci, that the NIH did not support gain-of-function research or potential pandemic pathogen enhancement at WIV are untruthful.”

This new information again questions the origins of COVID-19, which many scientists proposed was from a wet market in China where humans and animals are in close

contact. However, bioscience safety experts have long suspected a lab origin. It appears that some in the U.S. government and some scientists have not learned from the gain-of-function research in Wuhan and have brought the problem home to roost.

International Athletes Willfully Exposed to Lab-Leaked Virus

Whether the virus was released intentionally or accidentally is a question for another day. Long before the outbreak, scientists had expressed concerns that these kinds of experiments may end up creating the thing they were reportedly working against. As the Intercept reports,²³ in 2014 a grant was awarded to EcoHealth Alliance titled “Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence.”

Part of the grant money was earmarked to identify and alter bat coronaviruses suspected of being able to infect humans. In the grant the writers acknowledged concerns stating, “Fieldwork involves the highest risk of exposure to SARS or other CoVs, while working in caves with high bat density overhead and the potential for fecal dust to be inhaled.”²⁴

In the USAID announcement, the government agency gives an overview of the goals in one sentence:²⁵ “The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to advancing global health security, international pandemic preparedness and global health resilience.” As the Breaking Points anchor in the video above says,²⁶ “So essentially, we have learned nothing.”

August 1, 2021, Rep Michael McCaul, R-Texas, the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs committee, published an addendum to the investigation into the origins of SARS-CoV-2. The investigation concluded:²⁷

“... the preponderance of evidence suggests SARS-CoV-2 was accidentally released from a Wuhan Institute of Virology laboratory sometime prior to September 12, 2019. The virus, or the viral sequence that was genetically manipulated, was likely collected in a cave in Yunnan province, PRC, between 2012 and 2015.”

Researchers at the WIV, officials within the CCP, and potentially American citizens directly engaged in efforts to obfuscate information related to the origins of the virus and to suppress public debate of a possible lab leak.”

By the end of August 2021, the White House released a statement from President Biden essentially calling the intelligence report inconclusive,²⁸ “while this review has concluded, our efforts to understand the origins of this pandemic will not rest.”

Multiple pieces of information led the committee to conclude there was ample evidence to support genetic modification of the coronavirus and there was a cover-up which “likely turned what could have been a local outbreak into a global pandemic.”²⁹ The cover-up involved the 2019 Military Games held October 18, 2019, in Wuhan China.

The report demonstrated that by October 2019, health officials in Wuhan were well aware of an outbreak of infectious disease. The athletes reported that the city appeared to be in lockdown³⁰ while they were there. The games drew over 9,000 athletes from 109 countries. The Chinese government had 236,000 volunteers, 90 hotels, three railroad stations and more than 2,000 drivers available for the athletes.

The report included a quote from a Canadian Armed Forces personnel who participated in the games, which appeared in The Financial Post.³¹ He was told the lockdown in the city was to make it easier for the participants in the games to get around. Twelve days after arrival in Wuhan, he was sick with fever, chills, vomiting and insomnia.

He reported that on the flight home to Canada, 60 athletes were isolated at the back of the plane for the 12-hour flight with a range of symptoms including coughing and diarrhea. After returning home, the same service member found his family members got ill, which the report finds is:³²

“... consistent with both human-to-human transmission of a viral infection and COVID-19. Similar claims about COVID-19 like symptoms have been made by athletes from Germany, France, Italy, and Sweden.”

Funding Gain-of-Function Research Out in the Open

Following the release of The Intercept report and additional grant documentation, some GOP members are calling for Dr. Anthony Fauci to resign while others want him fired from his position on the White House COVID-19 response team.³³

U.S. Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., has referred Fauci to the Department of Justice for an investigation for possible perjury charges relating to his Congressional testimony in May 2021³⁴ and July 2021,³⁵ when he vehemently denied ever having funded gain-of-function research.

Paul specifically asked the DOJ³⁶ to investigate whether Fauci violated 18 U.S. Code § 100121³⁷ – which makes it a federal crime to make “any materially false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or representation” as part of “any investigation or review” conducted by Congress – or any other statute.

How much genetic manipulation and gain-of-function research that occurs as a result of the \$125 million grant to the university may not come to light for years. However, it is incumbent on our government to ensure biosafety in the labs doing the research and, for the public, to call for a halt of this type of research that “create[s] large risks that don’t already exist.”³⁸

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