

## Tracing the origins of China's coronavirus: Infectious disease expert explains how it jumped from animals to humans

The Scientist spoke with [Peter Daszak](#), the president of the nonprofit EcoHealth Alliance and an infectious disease researcher who's done extensive research on emerging viruses in China and elsewhere. He talked with us about how 2019-nCoV fits in with other coronaviruses, including the virus that causes SARS, and how future events might be prevented.

Peter Daszak: There's a lot being done on how coronaviruses infect people from animals, because we've had a few events where they've jumped from animals into people.

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We developed an antibody test and we went to communities in Yunnan Province [in] rural southwest [China](#), and [tested] people who live near bat colonies where we'd found these viruses... We [found](#) a 3 percent prevalence of exposure to bat viruses... Suggesting that all the time across the region, bat viruses are getting into people and either infecting them with a mild infection [with] no clinical signs, or causing respiratory illness that never gets diagnosed properly. So this outbreak is probably just one of a number of spillover events that have happened in south China.

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We've got to find all these viruses in bats, get the sequences in the labs, get the viruses in the lab, and start working on new drugs—and deal with sanitation conditions.

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