

Conspiracy theorists suggest the coronavirus was engineered in a Chinese lab. The scientific consensus disagrees.

[O]n Fox News and social media, a dangerous conspiracy theory about the origin of the health crisis won't die.

There are two main versions of the rumor, and they have one common thread: that the coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, originated in a level 4 (the highest biosafety level) research laboratory in Wuhan.

In one version of the rumor, the virus was engineered in the lab by humans as a bioweapon. In another version, the virus was being studied in the lab (after being isolated from animals) and then [“escaped” or “leaked”](#) because of poor safety protocol.

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But already, virologists who've parsed the genome and infectious disease experts who study coronaviruses say they have enough evidence the virus is brand new and came from nature. A large group of them, citing genome analyses from multiple countries, recently affirmed in [The Lancet](#) that the virus originated in wildlife.

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“Conspiracy theories about manmade viruses are not new. We saw this with HIV — the rumor that the US made it and introduced it into Africa. But they are really dangerous kinds of things to get spread around,” Gerald Keusch, a professor of medicine and international health and associate director of Boston University's [National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories](#), told Vox.

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