

Like almost everything with COVID, the scientific debate over the virus's origins has become politically toxic

Scientists often disagree with each other – that is part of the scientific process... But the “lab leak v natural spillover” debate has moved beyond robust scientific disagreement.

In February 2020, Peter Daszak, who led the WHO investigation, was accused of silencing any debate over the possibility of a lab leak when he and 26 co-authors issued [a statement in the Lancet](#) medical journal stating: “We stand together to strongly condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that Covid-19 does not have a natural origin.”

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[S]ome scientists who had publicly dismissed the lab leak scenario came under attack, particularly on social media.

One who has worked on Sars-Cov-2's evolutionary origins since the pandemic's early days says the evidence points to a natural spillover. He told me he considered leaving his field of research because the abuse had become so bad.

The researcher, who did not want to be identified because they feared further harassment, said: “I’ve had email hacks, emails that attempt to entrap me, and claims that I’ve faked data and am part of some sort of a systemic cover-up. And others have had it far, far worse.

“All of this takes a toll and makes you question your worth.”

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