

Lab leak vs wet market: Navigating the odds of competing COVID origin theories

Those inclined to think... that the pandemic must have started from a traded wild animal share a fundamental intuition with those who point their fingers at the lab: They've both looked at all the facts and then identified a grand coincidence, and they both believe that their theory—and only their theory—can explain it.

A single question seems to be the fuel for every fight: What are the odds?

“Start with geography,” the science journalist Nicholas Wade suggested in May. What are the odds, he and others ask, that a global outbreak of the bat-derived SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus would just happen to begin a few miles from the Wuhan Institute of Virology?

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One coincidence may seem bigger than the other, and thus more likely to reflect the true origins of COVID-19.

I tend to think that the market theory has a bit more heft, based on what we know right now—but what we know right now remains limited to disclosures by Chinese authorities.

This much is clear: Both circumstantial cases, for a laboratory origin and for a market spillover, have been made in the absence of crucial evidence that might very well exist.

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)