

COVID ground zero: Three new studies again point to Wuhan live animal market as source of coronavirus outbreak

Scientists have [released three studies](#) that reveal intriguing new clues about how the COVID-19 pandemic started. Two of the reports trace the outbreak back to a massive market that sold live animals, among other goods, in Wuhan, China, and a third suggests that the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 spilled over from animals — possibly those sold at the market — into humans at least twice in November or December 2019. All three are preprints, and so have not been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

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These analyses add weight to original suspicions that the pandemic began at the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, which many of the people who were infected earliest with SARS-CoV-2 had visited.

The preprints contain genetic analyses of coronavirus samples collected from the market and from people infected in December 2019 and January 2020, as well as geolocation analyses connecting these samples to a section of the market where live animals were sold.

Taken together, these different lines of evidence point towards the market as the source of the outbreak — much like animal markets were ground zero for the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic of 2002–2004 — says Kristian Andersen, a virologist at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California, and an author on two of the reports. “This is extremely strong evidence,” he says.

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