

Fauci Says He Is ‘Open’ on Virus Lab Leak Theory

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Dr. [Anthony Fauci](#) says he is keeping an “open mind” over claims that the coronavirus may have leaked from a Chinese lab, despite his long-standing assertion that the virus had a natural origin.

“We have an open mind but it looks very much like this was a natural occurrence, but you keep an open mind,” Fauci [told Fox News](#) on July 23. The director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases argued that more allegations over the [lab leak](#) theory “doesn’t mean there’s more evidence of it.”

The chief medical adviser to President Joe Biden was pressed during the interview on [email comments](#) he made two years ago, claiming the lab leak theory would go away in time, despite evidence and internal expert opinions pointing to the opposite; that the virus came from a lab and not an animal.

It came when the P4 laboratory at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, a biosafety lab in the Chinese city of Wuhan, was widely believed to be where the coronavirus first emerged.

“When you read the email from Kristian Andersen who says ... ‘one has to look really closely to see some features [potentially] look engineered,’” said Fox News anchor Bret Baier. “And you say this is a shiny object and it will go away. It does not look like you’re open minded to it.”

“Bret, I know you’re a good person, I’ve known you a long time,” Fauci responded. “If you take a group of emails when people are considering and thinking out loud, and stop there, and don’t look at the weeks of consideration by the same people who wrote the same emails ... in published peer review literature, they explain why they thought it was a natural occurrence.”

The emails, disclosed by House Republicans in January this year ([pdf](#)), however, suggest that Fauci and a small group of top scientists [sought to promote the natural origin theory](#).

Andersen, a virologist at California’s Scripps Research Institute, emailed Fauci in January 2020 about the possibility of the virus being engineered, according to documents released under a Freedom of Information Act request.

He told Fauci, “The unusual features of the virus make up a really small part of the genome [$<0.1\%$] so one has to look really closely at all the sequences to see that some of the features [potentially] look engineered.”

Weeks later, Andersen published a study that claimed the virus has a natural origin and reportedly received a National Institutes of Health grant.

Fauci dismissed the lab leak theory in May 2020 in a National Geographic interview, saying the evidence “strongly suggests” a natural origin, but backtracked a year later, claiming he was “not convinced” that the virus developed naturally.

Republicans have vowed to investigate Fauci’s involvement in apparently trying to shut down narratives about the virus possibly leaking from the Wuhan lab, if the party takes control of Congress in November’s midterm elections.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) [told Fox News](#) on July 20 that Fauci could be forced to testify under oath about the virus’s origins and [gain of function research](#) that his office was reportedly conducting at the Wuhan lab.

Fauci has served as a public health expert for more than 50 years and was appointed as part of the Coronavirus Task Force by former President Donald Trump in 2020.

The 81-year-old revealed this week that he would retire before the end of Biden’s term in 2025.