

Cloaked Science: The Yan Reports | Media Manipulation Casebook

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The Yan Report is a misleading article masquerading as science, which falsely claims that the novel coronavirus was made in a Chinese lab. An example of cloaked science, it was released during a time of intense uncertainty; as scientists raced for answers about COVID-19, sharing unvetted data as preprints in open science repositories became an essential mode of international collaboration. The increasing openness of the scientific community, though, is a vulnerability that can be leveraged by media manipulators, especially during times of crisis. On April 28, 2020, Dr. Li-Meng Yan, a researcher at the University of Hong Kong (HKU), fled to the United States with support from Steve Bannon and Guo Wengui. They used Yan's story — that she was a whistleblower — to exploit the contentious wedge issue of the unknown origin of COVID-19.

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