

COVID-19: why lab-leak theory is back despite little new evidence | The Conversation

By Peter Knight

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President Biden has ordered the US intelligence agencies to deepen their investigation of whether the coronavirus emerged naturally from animal-to-human transmission or leaked accidentally from the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

The lab-leak theory had been floated by President Trump and others in his circle in April last year. It was widely dismissed at the time as an unfounded conspiracy theory with racist undertones. A statement in support of China, signed by prominent scientists, had been published in the Lancet in March 2020, and had cautioned against unfounded speculations about the origins of the virus.

But now the suggestion that the virus leaked from a lab is back on the agenda, with some wondering if the media failed to take the possibility seriously. In addition, Trump and his supporters have been quick to argue that they were right all along and shouldn't have been dismissed. How is it that a hypothesis long rejected as a conspiracy theory has come back around for consideration?

[...]

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