

# The strange case of China's Dr Fauci and life as a science whistleblower | Coda Story

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It's been a wild couple of weeks for academic misconduct. In China, the media has been filled with headlines about the story of the country's "Dr Fauci," aka top virologist Zhang Wenhong, who has been accused of plagiarising his PhD thesis after a user on Weibo outed him. I'll be investigating the allegations in an upcoming piece, but it got me thinking about the life of the academic whistleblower.

When I wrote about Chinese "paper mills" — content factories that churn out fake scientific research — last year, almost all of the scientists I spoke to refused to be quoted under their real names. They had devoted their lives to debunking bad scientific research, but the stakes were too high to reveal their identities.

According to Lex M. Bouter, professor of methodology and integrity at the University of Amsterdam, who spoke at a recent seminar held by the institution, several discrete types of people tend to report research misconduct. His list goes something like this: honestly concerned colleagues, angry ones seeking revenge, "machiavellists with self-serving motives," and green ink, all-caps "crazy people."

[...]

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