

COVID Skeptics Were Right: The US Government COVID-19 Report Vindicates Many Previously Contrarian Ideas

Raphael Lataster¹, Robert W. Malone^{2,3}

Abstract

Building upon a recent editorial that emphasized the importance of medical researchers entertaining contrarian ideology, we felt it might be illustrative to highlight and review the recently released final report of the United States House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, which significantly vindicated many previously taboo and widely censored perspectives – and also to consider the reporting on this report. During the height of the pandemic public health authorities and a complicit news media enforced government approved messaging concerning COVID-19's origins, social distancing, masking, lockdowns, and the need for vac-

cine mandates. The US House committee report concludes that many of these promoted narratives were significantly erroneous. Throughout that period, contrarian voices were repeatedly dismissed as spreading medical misinformation and identified authors subjected to various forms of state-sponsored or facilitated retaliation. A retrospective examination such as the Select Subcommittees' analysis and report can be a useful instrument for approaching future public health situations associated with panic and a desire to censor dissenting voices.

Keywords: COVID-19, COVID-19 vaccines, lockdowns, face masks, policy, risk-benefit analysis

The Report

A recent *Cureus* editorial addressed the importance of medical researchers entertaining contrarian ideas, “whilst still adhering to time-tested scientific principles and methods.” (1) Building on this topic we wish to brief the medical community on key findings contained within the recently published final

report of the bipartisan United States House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic. Of note, this report partly or fully vindicates many contrarian perspectives about COVID-19, for which many ‘COVID skeptics’ were pilloried, censored, systematically demeaned, and even fired during the time of the pandemic (including this article’s authors). (2,3) A summary provided by the Subcommittee, which they described as the “single most thorough review of the pandemic conducted to date”, is partly reproduced below, highlighting in particular the correctness of many contrarian, heretofore, taboo concepts. (4) Previously censored or suppressed perspectives now validated by the committee include:

1. COVID-19 ORIGIN: “COVID-19 most likely emerged from a laboratory in Wuhan, China.” Note that some form of lab leak hypothesis has subsequently become the position of the CIA. (5)
2. ECOHEALTH ALLIANCE INC. (ECOHEALTH): “EcoHealth — under the leadership of Dr. Peter Daszak — used U.S. taxpayer dol-

¹ Associate lecturer, FASS, University of Sydney, Camperdown NSW, Australia

² Consultant, RW Malone MD LLC, Madison VA, USA

³ Co-Chair, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA

Corresponding author:

Raphael Lataster (BPharm, PhD)
Associate lecturer, FASS, University of Sydney
Camperdown NSW 2050, Australia
Email: raphael.lataster@sydney.edu.au

lars to facilitate dangerous gain-of-function research in Wuhan, China. After the Select Subcommittee released evidence of EcoHealth violating the terms of its National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) commenced official debarment proceedings and suspended all funding to EcoHealth.”

3. NIH FAILURES: “NIH’s procedures for funding and overseeing potentially dangerous research are deficient, unreliable, and pose a serious threat to both public health and national security. Further, NIH fostered an environment that promoted evading federal record-keeping laws, as seen through the actions of Dr. David Morens and ‘FOIA Lady’ Marge Moore.”
4. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO): “The WHO’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic was an abject failure because it caved to pressure from the Chinese Communist Party and placed China’s political interests ahead of its international duties. Further, the WHO’s newest effort to solve the problems exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic — via a ‘Pandemic Treaty’ — may harm the United States.”
5. SOCIAL DISTANCING: “The ‘6 feet apart’ social distancing recommendation — which shut down schools and small businesses across the country — was arbitrary and not based on science. During closed-door testimony, Dr. Fauci testified that the guidance sort of just appeared.”
6. MASK MANDATES: “There was no conclusive evidence that masks effectively protected Americans from COVID-19. Public health officials flipped-flopped on the efficacy of masks without providing Americans scientific data — causing a massive uptick in public distrust.”
7. LOCKDOWNS: “Prolonged lockdowns caused immeasurable harm to not only the American economy, but also to the mental and physical health of Americans, with a particularly negative effect on younger citizens. Rather than prioritizing the protection of the most vulnerable populations, federal and state government policies forced millions of Americans to forgo crucial elements of a healthy and financially sound life.”
8. NEW YORK PANDEMIC FAILURES: “Former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo’s March 25 Order — which forced nursing homes to accept COVID-19 positive patients — was medical malpractice. Evidence shows that Mr. Cuomo and his Administration worked to cover

up the tragic aftermath of their policy decisions in an apparent effort to shield themselves from accountability.”

9. TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS: “President Trump’s rapidly implemented travel restrictions saved lives. During Dr. Fauci’s transcribed interview, he unequivocally agreed with every travel restriction issued by the Trump Administration. This testimony runs counter to the public narrative that the Trump Administration’s travel restrictions were xenophobic.”
10. COVID-19 MISINFORMATION: “Public health officials often spread misinformation through conflicting messaging, kneejerk reactions, and a lack of transparency. In the most egregious examples of pervasive misinformation campaigns, off-label drug use and the lab leak theory were unjustly demonized by the federal government.
The Biden Administration even employed undemocratic and likely unconstitutional methods — including pressuring social media companies to censor certain COVID-19 content — to fight what it deemed misinformation.”
11. RUSHED COVID-19 VACCINE APPROVAL: “The FDA rushed approval of the COVID-19 vaccine in order to meet the Biden Administration’s arbitrary mandate timeline. Two leading FDA scientists warned their colleagues about the dangers of rushing the vaccine approval process and the likelihood of adverse events. They were ignored, and days later, the Biden Administration mandated the vaccine.”
12. VACCINE MANDATES: “Vaccine mandates were not supported by science and caused more harm than good. The Biden Administration coerced healthy Americans into compliance with COVID-19 vaccine mandates that trampled individual freedoms, harmed military readiness, and disregarded medical freedom to force a novel vaccine on millions of Americans without sufficient evidence to support their policy decisions.”
13. NATURAL IMMUNITY: “Public health officials engaged in a coordinated effort to ignore natural immunity — which is acquired through previous COVID-19 infection — when developing vaccine guidance and mandates.”
14. VACCINE INJURY REPORTING SYSTEM: “Vaccine injury reporting systems created confusion, failed to properly inform the American public about vaccine injuries, and deteriorated public trust in vaccine safety during the

COVID-19 pandemic.”

15. **VACCINE INJURY COMPENSATION:** “The government is failing to efficiently, fairly, and transparently adjudicate claims for the COVID-19 vaccine injured.”
16. **BUSINESS IMPACTS:** “Federal and state governments imposed mandatory lockdowns that were the primary cause of temporary and permanent business closures. More than 160,000 businesses closed due to the pandemic — with 60% of those closures classified as permanent. For the businesses that stayed or re-opened, the lack of supply chain diversity exacerbated pandemic-era challenges and deepened existing disparities.”
17. **HEALTHCARE IMPACTS:** “America’s healthcare system was severely damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. Patients experienced a decreased quality-of-care, longer wait times, shorter medical appointments, and missed diagnoses.”
18. **WORKER IMPACTS:** “Unemployment rates surged to levels not seen since the Great Depression. Overly broad mitigation measures — including the now debunked ‘6 feet apart’ guidance — disproportionately impacted sectors with low-wage earners.”
19. **FEDERAL RESERVE:** “The Federal Reserve’s aggressive, early, and unprecedented response to the COVID-19 pandemic prevented a severe economic downturn. This continued approach also contributed to staggering inflation.”
20. **COVID-19 SCHOOL CLOSURES:** “The ‘science’ never justified prolonged school closures. Children were unlikely to contribute to the spread of COVID-19 or suffer severe illness or mortality. Instead, as a result of school closures, children experienced historic learning loss, higher rates of psychological distress, and decreased physical well-being.”
21. **LONGTERM IMPACTS:** “Standardized test scores show that children lost decades worth of academic progress as a result of COVID-19 school closures. Mental and physical health concerns also skyrocketed — with suicide attempts by 12-17 year-old girls rising 51%.”
22. **HHS OBSTRUCTION:** “The Biden Administration’s HHS engaged in a multi-year campaign of delay, confusion, and non-responsiveness in an attempt to obstruct the Select Subcommittee’s investigation and hide evidence that could incriminate or embarrass senior public health officials. It appears that HHS even intentionally under-resourced its component that responds to legislative oversight requests.”
23. **ECOHEALTH OBSTRUCTION:** “EcoHealth President Dr. Peter Daszak obstructed the Select Subcommittee’s investigation by providing publicly available information, instructing his staff to reduce the scope and pace of productions, and doctoring documents before releasing them to the public. Further, Dr. Daszak provided false statements to Congress.”
24. **DR. DAVID MORENS:** “Dr. Fauci’s Senior Advisor, Dr. David Morens, deliberately obstructed the Select Subcommittee’s investigation, likely lied to Congress on multiple occasions, unlawfully deleted federal COVID-19 records, and shared nonpublic information about NIH grant processes with EcoHealth President Dr. Peter Daszak.”
25. **NEW YORK OBSTRUCTION:** “New York’s Executive Chamber — led presently by Governor Kathy Hochul — redacted documents, offered numerous illegitimate privilege claims, and withheld thousands of documents without an apparent legal basis to obstruct the Select Subcommittee’s investigation into former Governor Cuomo’s pandemic-era failures.”

Their report makes clear that many of the so-called conspiracy theories of several COVID contrarians were at the very least plausibly correct. Examples include the lab leak hypothesis; the relative failures of social distancing, masking, and lockdowns; as well as the missteps (and ‘reverse misinformation’ – correct information mislabelled as misinformation, especially by authorities) of the governmental and non-governmental organisations charged with keeping us safe. And as medical researchers, we find the concerted effort to denigrate natural immunity particularly galling. There is also much that went unmentioned, such as the news (broken by Reuters and eventually admitted to) that the US government, whilst demonising those who asked rational questions around COVID-19 vaccines, carried out a deceitful and hypocritical “anti-vax propaganda effort” throughout Asia to discourage COVID-19 vaccination with the Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine. (6) And it may have been beneficial to note that the CDC quietly altered its website after it became known that their claims about the vaccines and their products staying at the injection sites, for only a few days, and doing no harm, were false (now known via internet archives). (7) For example, the high profile and ongoing Yale School of Medicine LISTEN study reveals that at least in one case COVID-19 vaccine products have been found in a vaccinee approximately 2 years after vaccination. (8)

Nevertheless, contrarian opinions on the vaccine mandates were also vindicated by the report, which agreed that they were unscientific and “caused more harm than good”, though the COVID-19 vaccines themselves appear to be the sole remaining shibboleth, with the Subcommittee declaring, even though it acknowledged vaccine injuries and “Contrary to what was promised, the COVID-19 vaccine did not stop the spread or transmission of the virus”, that “Operation Warp Speed — which encouraged the rapid development and authorization of the COVID-19 vaccine — was highly successful and helped save millions of lives.” Intriguingly, only a handful of the several thousand references were cited in support of Operation Warp Speed in the full report, one of which is a blog post appearing on the website of the Commonwealth Fund; the other being a summary of a study appearing on the website of the NIH, one of the organisations accused of failures in the report; but also mentioned is the more prestigious and hugely influential Watson et al, which claims that the vaccines saved tens of millions, (9) and which was critiqued in this very journal. (10) In order to determine if certain COVID contrarians were also at least partially correct on this issue, medical researchers may wish to scrutinise all of these sources in the style of recent critiques of major COVID-19 vaccine studies, as released by Lataster in the *BMJ* as a rapid response, (11) and as an article proper in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*. (12)

In any case, what this official and bipartisan government report concludes and acknowledges about the COVID-19 pandemic provides ample vindication for several COVID skeptics whose voices have been marginalised.

[Since initial submission, further vindication comes from US health officials declaring that healthy children will no longer be recommended to receive COVID-19 vaccines, reportedly due to a lack of evidence; (13) and from Australian health officials no longer recommending COVID-19 vaccination for healthy children, with language indicating that the risks outweigh the benefits. (14) The Australian case is especially interesting as the studies cited in support were published in 2023, utilising data from 2020-2022, so the notion that the risks of COVID-19 vaccination outweigh the benefits, at least in certain groups, is not something that is suddenly true now, it has been the case for several years, perhaps from the very beginning, as some had effectively argued. (15)]

The Reporting

As a final note, we wish to briefly highlight some of the politicised reporting around this report. At least one mainstream news outlet referred to the report as “the GOP report”, accusing it of embracing “COVID conspiracy-mongering.” (16) While it could be argued that the endeavour was “Republican-dominated”, or “Republican-led” (as in a more measured CNN article), (17) it ought to be recognised that the final report was released during the Biden Administration, and before Robert F. Kennedy Jr. became the secretary of health and human services; and that video footage reveals that the subcommittee - which contained many Democrat as well as Republican members - “voted unanimously to pass the final draft.” (18) It is also worth noting that the subcommittee’s report, with its many scientific references, effectively criticised the policies of Republican, as well as Democrat, pandemic-era policies.

As for reporting via the scientific and medical journals, *Science* also characterised the report as the “Republicans’ report.” (19) Reacting with more contempt is the *BMJ*, with news chronicler Dyer describing the two political parties’ “competing reports”, apparently unaware that there is only one official – and bipartisan – report. (20) Dyer’s comments on the lab leak hypothesis have already aged poorly given the CIA’s recent revelation. Worse still, Dyer notes the scepticism in the report concerning masking, lockdowns, and even the vaccines, but referred to this under the heading “Politicised investigations”, and did not attempt to engage with or even recognise the increasing evidence that contravenes the established narratives. (21-27) The *BMJ* rejected a proposed editorial providing a more complete critique of their reporting but did at least publish a brief review by Lataster as a rapid response. (28)

Notably, several months later the left-leaning *The Guardian* news outlet published an essay on a couple of left-leaning academics coming to similar conclusions on issues like “school shutdowns, business closures, mask mandates and social distancing”, indicating that left-leaning experts got so much about the pandemic wrong. (29) Soon afterwards, the White House published a new webpage summarising some of the aspects of the Congress COVID report, focusing on the lab leak hypothesis. (30) This allows us to further ponder to what extent we ought to trust government-backed authorities. Are we only to blindly trust authority when one political party is

in power, and turn about face when they leave office? Or should we simply question everything, as did the philosophers and scientists of old?

We also wish to note that this article is a follow-up to the aforementioned *Cureus* editorial, which did mention the Congress report as an example of the importance of considering contrarian ideas. Our submission caused debate amongst the editorial team, who promptly rejected it. They notified us that our article contained the “presence of a clear bias seen in misrepresenting the covid-19 report,” and falsely accused us of presenting “the report as undisputed fact”, which they found to be “highly controversial and partisan”. Refusing to send it out for peer-review, and refusing to consider an altered version (the original version was already quite nuanced and impartial, with names of politicians and political parties omitted), the editorial team even declared our “editorial to be misleading and potentially dan-

gerous.”

One of the editors reached out to us expressing their disappointment, informed us that they were highly critical of others in the editorial team, essentially stating that they may as well be upfront with potential authors that anything questioning the approved narratives will not be considered, and (somewhat echoing the retraction of a *Cureus* article which included accused misinformation merchants as co-authors) (31) indicated that the involvement of Malone was already potentially enough to have the submission rejected, as he “is a little too inflammatory a brand than is really needed”. How can we ‘trust the science’ when this is now the state of modern science? We are grateful that the editors of the *Journal of Independent Medicine* are more willing to allow researchers to follow the evidence, wherever it leads.

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