

Peer Review

Review of: "The Contentious Origins of SARS-CoV-2: A Comprehensive Review of Current Knowledge"

Hany Akeel Al-hussaniy¹

1. University of Baghdad, Iraq

Methodological Limitations of the Search Strategy

The search strategy uses only:

“origin of SARS-CoV-2”

This is overly restrictive and likely misses:

Studies on early phylogenetics not using that exact phrase

Analyses of early case clusters

Wildlife surveillance papers

Gain-of-function analyses

Laboratory biosafety reviews

Additionally:

No PRISMA-style flow diagram

No count of total studies screened vs. included

No study selection flow transparency

No risk-of-bias assessment

Although framed as a qualitative review, the paper presents itself as “comprehensive,” which requires stronger methodological transparency.

2- Narrative Framing of the Laboratory Hypothesis

While the review is mostly balanced, certain passages may be perceived as normatively framed rather than analytically framed, for example:

“This hypothesis is primarily based on circumstantial evidence, speculation, and misinformation...”

This wording may weaken scientific neutrality. A more academically neutral phrasing would be:

“To date, no direct empirical evidence has been presented demonstrating laboratory origin.”

The difference matters in such a contentious field.

3- Overemphasis on “Consensus” Language

Phrases like:

“Overwhelming weight of evidence”

“Strongly favors”

“Dominant narrative”

While supported by much literature, such wording may appear assertive in an area still debated internationally.

Recommendation: Emphasize weight of evidence without implying finality.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.