

## Three thousand infected by a bacterium

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### Body

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Chinese authorities have reported that more than 3,000 people in the northwest of the country have tested positive for bacterial disease. According to health authorities in Lanzhou, the capital of Gansu Province, the outbreak was caused by a leak at a biopharmaceutical company in 2019.

So far, 22,000 people have been tested and 3,245 have tested positive, but there have been no deaths from the infection.

The disease was reportedly caused by the leakage of waste gas from a factory of biological pharmaceuticals from a biologic pharmaceutical factory. According to the Global Times, the company allegedly used expired disinfectants to produce a Brucella vaccine.

As a result, sterilization was not complete and apparently the bacteria were still present in the company's gas emissions, the Lanzhou Biopharmaceutical Livestock Unit.

Contaminated gas spread through the air to the neighboring Veterinary Research Institute, where it infected nearly 200 people in Brucellosis last December.

Brucellosis is a disease transmitted by livestock or animal products. It is generally not contagious to humans, but can cause fever, joint pain and headaches. The Lanzhou Health Office said Friday that the bacteria generally came from sheep, cows or pigs.

The lab apologized earlier this year and was revoked for leave to produce brucellosis vaccines, and patients will receive financial compensation starting in October, Lanzhou authorities say.

Obviously, such situations are used to pay for the idea that viruses like Sars-cov-2, which produces Covid-19, can have a similar origin. But this is not the case, in the case of Sars-cov-2, as several studies have shown, it is not a virus produced in a laboratory. On the contrary, as evolutionary biologist and phylogeographer Rob Wallace points out, its origins are related to the destruction of ecological niches caused by agribusiness and industrial food production and promoted by Chinese, American and other capitals, and their subsequent zoonotic transmission through freight transport circuits.

At the same time, manipulation of pathogens is a reality. For example, there are "gain of function" studies, which seek to understand the ways in which viruses such as MERS or others can be "improved", to become more lethal, in order - of course - to find ways to deal with them. And as Rob Wallace himself points out in an interview with this journal: "It is remarkable that those dangerous experiments that were being conducted in China on gain-of-function studies in which they put bat SARS in laboratories were supported by both the Chinese government and the U.S. National Institute of Health."

Heavily criticized, in 2014 the U.S. government had banned such studies, but lifted the ban in 2017.

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