

## Death By Definition?

July 28, 2021

“What we’re alleging is that gain-of-function research was going on in that [Wuhan] lab and NIH funded it,” Sen. Rand Paul told Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for the last 37 years and the chief medical advisor to the president, at a Senate hearing last week.

Paul contended that Fauci had lied to Congress by claiming “NIH has not ever and does not now fund gain of function research in the Wuhan Institute of Virology,” when NIH did indeed finance such activity in that lab.

But Fauci denied that research met the official definition of “gain of function.”\*

“You take an animal virus and you increase its transmissibility to humans. You’re saying that’s not gain of function?” the senator asked incredulously.

“That is correct,” replied Fauci, before adding, “And Senator Paul, you do not know what you are talking about, quite frankly.”

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“Many scientists,” writes *Washington Post* columnist Josh Rogin, “*think Paul actually does know what he’s talking about*. One of them is Rutgers University microbiologist and biosafety expert Richard Ebright, whom Paul quoted as saying this research ‘matches, indeed epitomizes the definition of gain of function research.’”

The dispute pits Kentucky’s junior senator, concerned over



what actually happened, against the bureaucrat, wiggling out from the bad odor of a terrible policy by, apparently, redefining terms.

Mere logomachy.

“What everyone can now see clearly,” suggests Rogin, “is that NIH was collaborating on risky research with a Chinese lab that has zero transparency and zero accountability during a crisis — and no one in a position of power addressed that risk.”\*\*

“Fauci is arguing the system worked,” the columnist maintains. “It didn’t.”

The senator has officially referred the matter of Fauci’s fibbing to Congress to the Justice Department for possible (but unlikely) prosecution.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

\* “Any kind of animal virus that occurs in nature, that infects animals only, if you recombine it or mutate it or adapt it in the lab with other viruses so it has characteristics that change it from being an animal-only virus to being a virus that now can infect humans, that you’ve gained in function, you’ve gained pathogenesis or you’ve gained virulence — you’ve made it more dangerous,” Sen. Paul explained to Fox News’s Martha MacCallum. “Without question this is what happened in the Wuhan lab.”

\*\* “According to an intelligence fact sheet released by the Trump administration and partially confirmed by the Biden administration,” Rogin also points out, “the WIV took our help and used it to build another, secret part of the lab, where they worked with the Chinese military.”