

American Study Finds Signs of Coronavirus in US Before China Outbreak

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The US has added to research from [Italy](#) and France that indicates the coronavirus might have been circulating among people in a number of countries before it was identified in China and [erupted into a pandemic](#).

Scientists from the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said on Monday that tests of blood samples taken in the United States from December 13 last year revealed evidence of antibodies for the Covid-19 virus, known as Sars-Cov-2.

The samples were taken more than two weeks before the December 31 official confirmation of the outbreak in the central Chinese city of Wuhan and as much as a month earlier than the first confirmed case of Covid-19 in the US on January 19, according to the CDC report.

Antibodies are generated by the human immune system to identify and attack pathogens in the body and are specific to each type of virus, bacteria or parasite.

"The presence of these serum antibodies indicate that isolated Sars-CoV-2 infections may have occurred in the western portion of the United States earlier than previously recognised," CDC scientists wrote in the study, which was published in the peer-reviewed journal Clinical Infectious Diseases.

The finding follows an [analysis published in Italy last month](#) of blood samples taken since September 2019, which also indicated the presence of antibodies against the new coronavirus. In France, a swab taken from a hospital patient on December 27 later tested positive for the coronavirus, according to a report published in the *International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents* in June.

Both sets of samples were taken before the virus was identified in Wuhan and add to the politicised debate about the origins of the coronavirus.

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