

By using this site, you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#) and our [Terms of Use](#).



[U.S.](#) [World](#) [Opinion](#) [Politics](#) [Entertainment](#) [Business](#) [Lifestyle](#) [TV](#) [Fox Nation](#) [More](#)



Watch TV

Hot Topics [Ghislaine Maxwell](#) | [Coronavirus](#) | [Joe Biden](#)

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



[COVID-19 pandemic causes spike in pasta sales](#)



[SF Giants' Buster Posey opts out of 2020 pandemic-shortened baseball season](#)



[Lawrence Jones: We need media to challenge Biden on his policies](#)

[CORONAVIRUS](#) · Published 3 hours ago

EXCLUSIVE: Chinese virologist accuses Beijing of coronavirus cover-up, flees Hong Kong: 'I know how they treat whistleblowers'

Li-Meng Yan told Fox News that she believes China knew about the coronavirus well before it claimed it did. She says her supervisors also ignored research she was doing that she believes could have saved lives.



By [Barnini Chakraborty](#), [Alex Diaz](#) | [Fox News](#)



Fox News First
MORNING HEADLINES

Get all the stories you need-to-know from the most powerful name in news delivered first thing every morning to your inbox

Arrives **Weekdays**

[Subscribe](#)

More from Fox News

Coronavirus Whistleblower: Exclusive Fox News Interview

Dr. Li-Meng Yan, a virologist from Hong Kong, tells Fox News in an exclusive interview about the early research she says she conducted into COVID-19, and why she believes that research was withheld from the world.

EXCLUSIVE: [Hong Kong](#) scientist Dr. Li-Meng Yan was stepping into uncharted territory.

Hours before she boarded an April 28 Cathay Pacific flight to the United States, the respected doctor who specialized in virology and immunology at the [Hong Kong School of Public Health](#) had plotted her escape, packing her bag and sneaking past the censors and video cameras on campus.

She had her passport and her purse and was about to leave all of her loved ones behind. If she was caught, she knew she could be thrown in jail -- or, worse, rendered one of the "disappeared."

Yan told Fox News in an exclusive interview that she believes the Chinese government knew about the [novel coronavirus](#) well before it claimed it did. She says her supervisors, renowned as some of the top experts in the field, also ignored research she was doing at the onset of the pandemic that she believes could have saved lives.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION SUBMITS NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL FROM WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

She adds that they likely had an obligation to tell the world, given their status as a [World Health Organization](#) reference laboratory specializing in influenza viruses and pandemics, especially as the virus began spreading in the early days of 2020.

Yan, now in hiding, claims the government in the country where she was born is trying to shred her reputation and accuses government goons of choreographing a cyber-attack against her in hopes of keeping her quiet.

Yan believes her life is in danger. She fears she can never go back to her home and lives with the hard truth that she'll likely never see her friends or family there again.

CHINESE AUTHORITIES DETAIN OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF XI JINPING

Still, she says, the risk is worth it.

"The reason I came to the U.S. is because I deliver the message of the truth of COVID," she told Fox News from an undisclosed location.



[Woj bomb? Sen. Hawley posts ESPN reporter's...](#)

Fox News

[Oregon tops daily coronavirus case record at 389](#)

Fox News



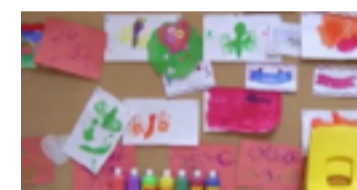
[Trump accuses Biden of 'plagiarizing' hi...](#)

Fox News



[Carrie Underwood shares 'awkward' throwback pictu...](#)

Fox News



[American Academy of Pediatrics sides...](#)

Fox News



[Valentina Sampaio becomes first...](#)

Fox News

Ads by Verizon Media

Trending in World



[Venice daily tests Moses anti-flood system after years of reported corruption, delays](#)



[WP sends team to China to set up in' into COVID-19 origins: report](#)

She added that if she tried to tell her story in China, she "will be disappeared and killed."



Photo of Dr. Li-Meng Yan at her wedding. (Yan)

Yan's story weaves an extraordinary claim about cover-ups at the highest levels of government and seemingly exposes the obsessive compulsion of President Xi Jinping and his Communist Party to control the coronavirus narrative: what China knew, when it knew it and what edited information it peddled to the rest of the world.

[CHINA CHURCHES ORDERED TO PRAISE XI JINPING'S HANDLING OF CORONAVIRUS BEFORE REOPENING, WATCHDOG SAYS](#)

Yan, who says she was one of the first scientists in the world to study the novel coronavirus, was allegedly asked by her supervisor at the University/WHO reference lab, Dr. Leo Poon, in 2019 to look into the odd cluster of SARS-like cases coming out of mainland China at the end of December 2019.

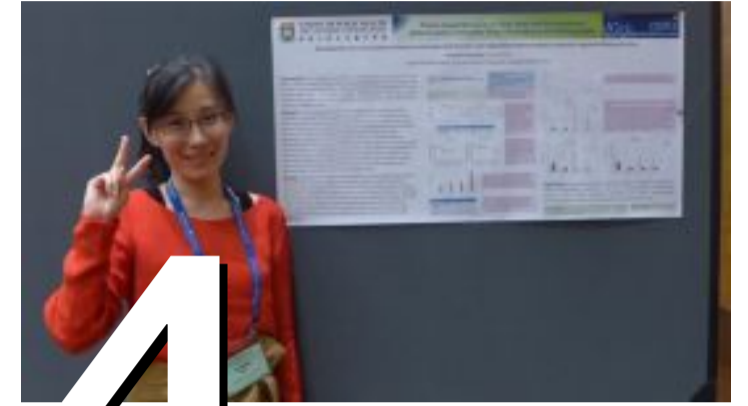
"The China government refused to let overseas experts, including ones in Hong Kong, do research in China," she said. "So I turned to my friends to get more information."

Yan had an extensive network of professional contacts in various medical facilities in mainland China, having grown up and completed much of her studies there. She says that is the precise reason she was asked to conduct this kind of research, especially at a time when she says her team knew they weren't getting the whole truth from the government.

One friend, a scientist at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in China, had first-hand knowledge of the cases and purportedly told Yan on Dec. 31 about human-to-human transmission well before China or the WHO admitted such spread



[Hong Kong suspends plans for school reopening weeks after relaxing coronavirus lockdown restrictions](#)



[Ex-Chinese virologist accuses Beijing of coronavirus cover-up, flees Hong Kong: 'I know how they treat whistleblowers'](#)

Sponsored Stories

[Chick-Fil-A Returns Bag A Lot Heavi...](#)

Sponsored | WorldLifeStyle



[This is the Oldest Restaurant ...](#)

Sponsored | IcePop

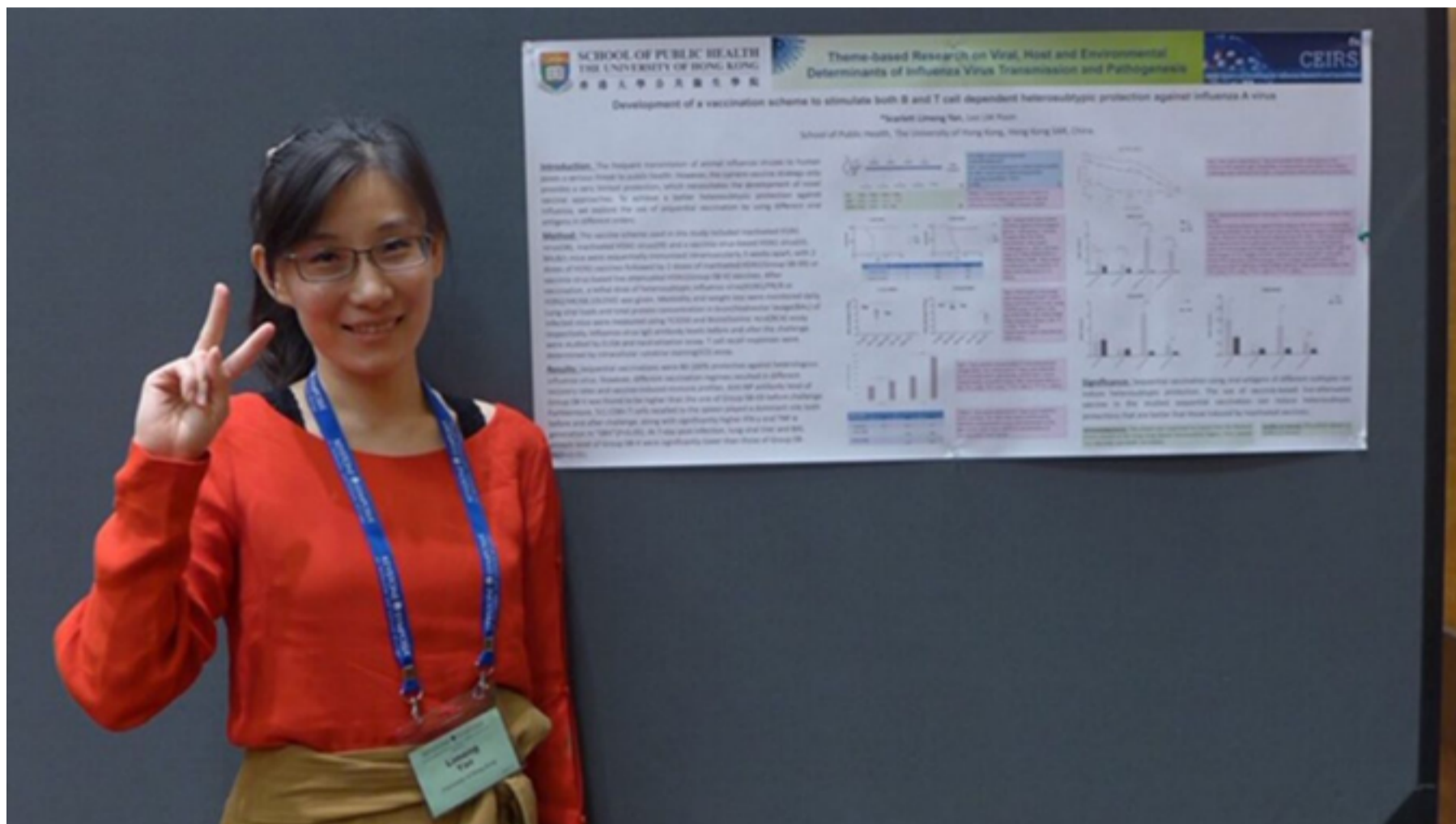
Ads by Verizon Media

was possible.

She reported some of these early findings back to her boss, Yan said.

"He just nodded," she recalled, and told her to keep working.

A few days later, on Jan. 9, 2020, the WHO put out a statement: "According to Chinese authorities, the virus in question can cause severe illness in some patients and does not transmit readily between people... There is limited information to determine the overall risk of this reported cluster."



Dr. Li-Meng Yan in Hong Kong (Yan)

Yan said she and her colleagues across China discussed the peculiar virus but that she soon noted a sharp shift in tone.

Doctors and researchers who had been openly discussing the virus suddenly clammed up. Those from the city of Wuhan--which later would become the hub of the outbreak--went silent and others were warned not to ask them details.

The doctors said, ominously, "We can't talk about it, but we need to wear masks," Yan said.

'EMERGING EVIDENCE' OF CORONAVIRUS AIRBORNE TRANSMISSION INDICATED BY WHO

Then the numbers of human-to-human transmission began to grow exponentially, according to her sources, and Yan started digging for answers.

"There are many, many patients who don't get treatment on time and diagnosis on time," Yan said. "Hospital doctors are scared, but they cannot talk. CDC staff are scared."

She said she reported her findings to her supervisor again on Jan. 16 but that's when he allegedly told her "to keep silent, and be careful."

"As he warned me before, 'Don't touch the red line,'" Yan said referring to the government. "We will get in trouble and we'll be disappeared."

She also claims the co-director of a WHO-affiliated lab, [Professor Malik Peiris](#), knew but didn't do anything about it.

Peiris also did not respond to requests for comment. The WHO website lists Peiris as an "adviser" on the WHO International Health Regulations Emergency Committee for Pneumonia due to the Novel Coronavirus 2019-nCoV.

Yan was frustrated, but not surprised.

"I already know that would happen because I know the corruption among this kind of international organization like the WHO to China government, and to China Communist Party," she said. "So basically... I accept it but I don't want this misleading information to spread to the world."



The WHO and China have vehemently denied claims of a coronavirus cover-up.

The WHO has also denied that Yan, Poon or Peiris ever worked directly for the organization.

"Professor Malik Peiris is an infectious disease expert who has been on WHO missions and expert groups - as are many people eminent in their fields," WHO spokeswoman Margaret Ann Harris said in an email. "That does not make him a WHO staff member, nor does he represent WHO."

[HOUSE GOP ACCUSES CHINA, WHO OF 'FAILURE OF MONUMENTAL PROPORTIONS' IN SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS](#)

Yan says despite any pushback, she has been emboldened by a sense of right and wrong and says she had to speak up despite the personal and professional consequences.

"I know how they treat whistleblowers," she said.

"I know how they treat whistleblowers."

— Dr. Li-Meng Yan

Like so many before her, once Yan decided to speak out against China, she discovered her life was apparently in jeopardy, as well as that of those closest to her.

It was a fear directly relayed to her and seemingly confirmed by U.S.-based Hong Kong blogger [Lu Deh](#), she says.

After she shared some of her theories and suspicions with him, he told her she would need to relocate, perhaps to the United States, where she wouldn't have to constantly look over her shoulder. Only then would she be safe and have a platform to speak, he said.

Yan made the decision to leave, but things got complicated when her husband of six years, who also worked at her lab, discovered the telephone call between his wife and the blogger.

Yan told Fox News she begged her husband to go with her, and says while her spouse, a reputable scientist himself, had initially been supportive of her research, he suddenly had a change of heart.

"He was totally pissed off," she said. "He blamed me, tried to ruin my confidence... He said they will kill all of us."

"He said, 'they will kill all of us.'"

— Dr. Li-Meng Yan

Shocked and hurt, Yan made the decision to leave without him.

She got her ticket to the U.S. on April 27. She was on a flight the next day.

When she landed at Los Angeles International Airport after her 13-hour journey, she was stopped by customs officials.

Fear gripped her and Yan didn't know if she would end up in jail or be sent back to China.

"I had to tell them the truth," she said. "I'm doing the right thing. So I tell them that 'don't let me go back to China. I'm the one who came to tell the truth here of COVID-19... And please protect me. If not, the China government will kill me."

[The FBI](#) was allegedly called in to investigate. Yan claims they interviewed her for hours, took her cell phone as evidence and allowed her to continue to her destination.

The FBI told Fox News it could neither confirm nor deny Yan's claims; however, Fox News was shown an evidence receipt that appeared to confirm an interaction.

As Yan was trying to find her footing in America, she says her friends and family back home were being put through the wringer.

Yan claims the government swarmed her hometown of Qingdao and that agents ripped apart her tiny apartment and questioned her parents. When she contacted her mother and father, they pleaded with her to come home, told her she didn't know what she was talking about and begged her to give up the fight.

The University of Hong Kong took down her page and apparently revoked access to her online portals and emails, despite the fact that she says she was on an approved annual leave. In a statement to Fox News, a school spokesperson said Yan is not currently an employee.

"Dr Li-Meng Yan is no longer a staff member of the University," the statement read. "Out of respect for our current and former employees, we don't disclose personal information about her. Your understanding is appreciated."



The Chinese Embassy in the United States told Fox News they don't know who Yan is and maintain China has handled the pandemic heroically.

"We have never heard of this person," the emailed statement read. "The Chinese government has responded swiftly and effectively to COVID-19 since its outbreak. All its efforts have been clearly documented in the white paper "Fighting COVID-19: China in Action" with full transparency. Facts tell all."

The WHO has also continued to deny any wrongdoing during the earliest days of the virus. The medical arm of the United Nations has been taken to task recently by scientists challenging its official view of how the virus spreads. The WHO has also altered the coronavirus timeline on its website, now saying it got information about the virus from WHO scientists and not the Beijing authorities--as it has claimed for more than six months.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FOX NEWS APP](#)

Fox News has also reached out to the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the scientists Yan accuses of suppressing her concerns for comment.

Yan says she'll continue to speak out--but knows there's a target on her back.

You can find Barnini Chakraborty on Twitter [@Barnini](#).

Sponsored Stories You May Like

Ads by Verizon Media



[This is the Oldest Restaurant in Virginia](#)

Sponsored | [IcePop](#)



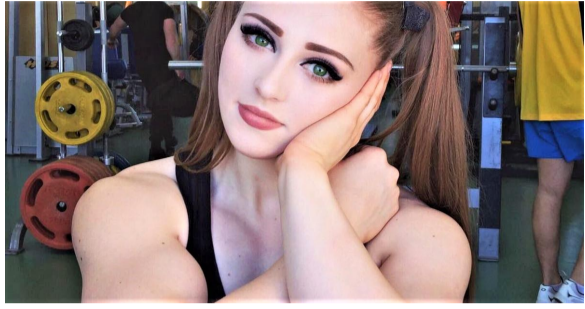
[1960's Habits That Are No Longer Accepted](#)

Sponsored | [History A2Z](#)



[25 Countries Americans Aren't Welcome In](#)

Sponsored | [Travel.alot](#)



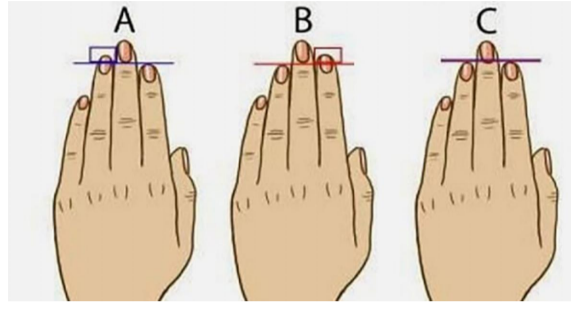
[Mind Blowing Photos Of Life In Russia](#)

Sponsored | [DirectExpose](#)



[Old TV Shows That Most People Forgot](#)

Sponsored | [Investing.com](#)



[What This Physical Trait Says About You](#)

Sponsored | [Post Fun](#)

Sponsored Stories

- [Hippos Who Escaped Zoo Are Having One Wild Effect](#)

Sponsored | [Spirited Bliss](#)

- [Why You Should Always Put Hangers on Hotel Curtain](#)

Sponsored | [IcePop](#)

- [Dairy Queen Facts That May Change Your Order](#)

Sponsored | [Boredom Therapy](#)

- [Chick-Fil-A Returns Bag A Lot Heavier Than Before](#)

Sponsored | [WorldLifeStyle](#)

- [Student Gets Photo From Mom, Feels Stomach Drop](#)

Sponsored | [Head Cramp](#)

- [Man Who Found 'Gold' Is In Awe To Learn Its Value](#)

Sponsored | [Honest To Paws](#)

More from Fox News

- [Woj bomb? Sen. Hawley posts ESPN reporter's alleged profane response to his criticism of NBA's directive](#)

[Fox News](#)

- [Oregon tops daily coronavirus case record at 389](#)

[Fox News](#)

- [Trump accuses Biden of 'plagiarizing' him over 'buy American' push](#)

[Fox News](#)

- [Carrie Underwood shares 'awkward' throwback picture of her and Mike Fischer for 10-year anniversary](#)

[Fox News](#)

- [American Academy of Pediatrics sides with teachers unions, rips funding threats cited by White House](#)

[Fox News](#)

- [Valentina Sampaio becomes first transgender model to appear in Sports Illustrated Swimsuit issue](#)

[Fox News](#)



U.S.

[Crime](#)
[Military](#)
[Education](#)
[Terror](#)
[Immigration](#)
[Economy](#)
[Personal Freedoms](#)
[Fox News Investigates](#)

World

[U.N.](#)
[Conflicts](#)
[Terrorism](#)
[Disasters](#)
[Global Economy](#)
[Environment](#)
[Religion](#)
[Scandals](#)

Politics

[Executive](#)
[Senate](#)
[House](#)
[Judiciary](#)
[Foreign Policy](#)
[Polls](#)
[Elections](#)

Entertainment

[Celebrity News](#)
[Movies](#)
[TV News](#)
[Music News](#)
[Style News](#)
[Entertainment Video](#)

Business

[Markets](#)
[Politics](#)
[Technology](#)
[Features](#)
[Business Leaders](#)

Lifestyle

[Food + Drink](#)
[Cars + Trucks](#)
[Travel + Outdoors](#)
[House + Home](#)
[Fitness + Well-being](#)
[Style + Beauty](#)
[Family](#)
[Faith](#)

Science

[Archaeology](#)
[Air & Space](#)
[Planet Earth](#)
[Wild Nature](#)
[Natural Science](#)
[Dinosaurs](#)

Tech

[Security](#)
[Innovation](#)
[Drones](#)
[Computers](#)
[Video Games](#)
[Military Tech](#)

Health

[Coronavirus](#)
[Healthy Living](#)
[Medical Research](#)
[Mental Health](#)
[Cancer](#)
[Heart Health](#)
[Children's Health](#)

TV

[Shows](#)
[Personalities](#)
[Watch Live](#)
[Full Episodes](#)
[Show Clips](#)
[News Clips](#)

About

[Contact Us](#)
[Careers](#)
[Fox Around the World](#)
[Advertise With Us](#)
[Media Relations](#)
[Corporate Information](#)
[Compliance](#)
[Supplier Diversity](#)

Other

[Fox Nation](#)
[Fox News Shop](#)
[Fox News Go](#)
[Fox News Radio](#)
[Newsletters](#)
[Alerts](#)
[Podcasts](#)
[Apps & Products](#)



[New Terms of Use](#) | [Updated Privacy Policy](#) | [Do Not Sell my Personal Information](#) | [Closed Captioning Policy](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Accessibility Statement](#)



This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. ©2020 FOX News Network, LLC. All rights reserved. All market data delayed 20 minutes.

