

**Response from Sharri Markson, National Political Editor, The Daily Telegraph:**

**1. Why did you not tell readers in the first part of your investigation, on 28 April, that the government believed there was only a 5% chance of the lab escape story being true?**

I have been very careful to point out in every story on this topic that the Morrison Government's position is that it is unlikely the virus accidentally escaped from a lab, unlike the position of the US Government.

Here is the line from my story last Tuesday.

"The Australian government's position is the virus most likely originated from the Wuhan wet markets but it is possible it was accidentally released from a laboratory."

By the way, that 5 per cent figure you cite I broke through my own reporting in my column two weeks ago.

**2. Why did you not tell readers that the bat virus being worked on by Shi Zhengli, RaTG13, is not the same genetically as SARS-CoV-2? And that RaTG13 cannot infect humans.**

Your question is wrong. Shi Zhengli has obtained samples of dozens of bat viruses - some reports say 50 - and she intends to collect samples of as many of the 5000 coronaviruses from bats as possible, according to an interview she gave with the Scientific American magazine on April 27.

My first story did not delve into which viruses she was working on, instead it said: "She used faecal samples of horseshoe bats to identify that they were the natural host for SARS-like coronaviruses."

**3. Why did you not tell readers that the overwhelming verdict from virus researchers is that the virus did not escape from any lab? CSIRO says "...research of the genome has found no evidence of laboratory manipulation and there is no published evidence of this virus having been previously identified."**

My first story was not about where the virus originated. It was about how researchers at the centre of the international probe studied live bats in Australia.