



By email

request-753722-ab8ba251@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: 10/05/21/ld/259

24 May 2021

Dear Paul Lewis,

Re: Freedom of Information request - Has the SARS CoVid – 2 or now known as SARS CoVid – 19 ever been scientifically isolated

Thank you for your request received on 10 May 2021 addressed to Public Health England (PHE). In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), I can confirm that PHE does not hold the information you have specified.

Request

Has the SARS CoVid – 2 or now known as SARS CoVid – 19 ever been scientifically isolated and identified under the scientific method? And if so please show me the data proving it.

Response

PHE can confirm it does not hold the information you have specified.

PHE's microbiology teams use the term "isolation" to mean culture in the laboratory. It is used sometimes interchangeably to mean isolation from a patient or clinical material – but usually implies that the organism has been grown in culture. An organism is identified by looking for its unique genetic material in a clinical sample and further identification is refined and confirmed by whole genome sequencing.

The Virus Reference Laboratory at PHE, Colindale, London has grown the virus, SARS-CoV-2. The virus culture method has been published in the following peer-reviewed paper: <https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.32.2001483>

PHE's culture work on other SARS-CoV-2 variants is in progress and has not published in any peer-reviewed papers at present.

Under Section 16 of the FOI Act, public authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance. Accordingly, please find the following links below regarding evidence of COVID-19:

SARS-CoV-2 has been cultured and then subjected to electron microscopy. Evidence of the Electron Micrograph is available at the following link: <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/01/23/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-what-you-need-to-know/>

General information pertaining to SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease known as COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-background-information/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-epidemiology-virology-and-clinical-features>

'Finding the evidence: Coronavirus': <https://phelibrary.koha-ptfs.co.uk/coronavirusinformation>

The collection of 'Scientific evidence supporting the government response to coronavirus (COVID-19)': <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/scientific-evidence-supporting-the-government-response-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to me in writing in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied and would like to request an internal review, then please contact us at the address above or by emailing foi@phe.gov.uk.

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office if a complaint cannot be resolved through the PHE complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted by calling the ICO's helpline on 0303 123 1113, visiting the ICO's website at www.ico.org.uk or writing to the ICO at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely
FOI Team