

RAWSEP synopsis from November 16 2025 The Inside Medicine Newsletter written by Doctor Jeremy Faust with comment from Doctor Angela Rasmussen rebutting and scientifically debunking an article written by Trump NIH Director Doctor Jeremy Bhattacharya and his Principal Deputy director Matthew Memoli excerpted by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization Any brief fair use presented beyond the headline involves RAWSEP commentary criticism news reporting or research

RAWSEP View Doctors Jeremy Faust and Angela Rasmussen scientifically debunked an essay written by Trump National Institutes of Health NIH Director Jay Bhattacharya and his Principal Deputy director Matthew Memoli RAWSEP chooses to refer to the Faust Rasmussen side as the Rational Side or the B Side and RAWSEP chooses to refer to the Bhattacharya Memoli side as the Irrational side or the A Side below because that is the reasoned perception of the editor of RAWSEP The essay by Bhattacharya and Memoli is poorly reasoned The ways the essay is poorly reasoned and then proved irrational are demonstrated in 19 Bhattacharya Memoli incorrect assertions and 19 Faust Rasmussen correct rebuttals The REBUTTAL STATEMENTS alone and then the REBUTTAL STATEMENTS followed by Assertions and more descriptive Rebuttals end this webcast

19 REBUTTAL STATEMENTS alone

- 1 The assertion that Herd immunity would have been effective against COVID 19 is DEBUNKED
- 2 The assertion that NIH funded research was insignificant to cope with the COVID 19 pandemic is DEBUNKED
- 3 The assertion that a lab leak caused the COVID 19 virus is DEBUNKED
- 4 The idea that containing a virus is unattainable is DEBUNKED
- 5 The assertion that the government colluded with Big Pharma to get rich from Pandemics is DEBUNKED
- 6 The assertion that basic biological fieldwork was not meant to discover emerging threats is DEBUNKED
- 7 The assertion that viruses were studied to find if they had ability to penetrate human cells is DEBUNKED
- 8 Dangerous Gain of Function Research is a fear mongering moniker and use of this inaccurate term is DEBUNKED
- 9 A crazy fear mongering description of experiments in reality done to generate important knowledge is DEBUNKED
- 10 The implication that testing is done on humans is DEBUNKED
- 11 The assertion that contracts are awarded to Pharmaceutical Manufacturers to develop and stockpile vaccines is DEBUNKED
- 12 The assertion that containing a virus is not worth the risk of working in high containment is DEBUNKED
- 13 The assertion that spillover occurs while doing lab work is DEBUNKED
- 14 The assertion that working to create lifesaving vaccines is not worth the risk is DEBUNKED
- 15 Head in the sand actions like avoiding mitigatable research because it is risky is DEBUNKED
- 16 The assertion that lab leaks happen more than natural spillover is DEBUNKED
- 17 The assertion that a vague Trump directive that results in blocking funding for pandemic related research is helpful is DEBUNKED
- 18 Asserting that scientists do not already consider risks and benefits is DEBUNKED

19 The assertion that a lab leak fantasy exists is DEBUNKED

19 REBUTTALS followed by ASSERTIONS and descriptive REBUTTALS

1 The assertion that Herd immunity would have been effective against COVID 19 is DEBUNKED

1A Trying to use herd immunity among the young and healthy as a way to end the 2020 COVID 19 pandemic would have worked

1B Trying to use herd immunity among the young and healthy as a way to end the 2020 COVID 19 pandemic would not have worked Using the idea of herd immunity there would have been many more people who got infected before getting the chance to get vaccine protection

2 The assertion that NIH funded research was insignificant to cope with the COVID 19 pandemic is DEBUNKED

2A NIH funded research did not contribute significantly to coping with the COVID 19 pandemic

2B NIH funded research contributed significantly to coping with the COVID 19 pandemic

3 The assertion that a lab leak caused the COVID 19 virus is DEBUNKED

3A A lab leak caused the COVID 19 virus

3B All existing data are consistent with zoonotic emergence None of the available evidence is consistent with a virus emerging from a laboratory

4 The idea that containing a virus is unattainable is DEBUNKED

4A The scientifically based pandemic preparedness playbook is breathtaking even utopian in its ambition

4B It is telling that Bhattacharya and Memoli view planning strategies to mitigate the damage of significant public health threats like pandemics as a grand and possibly idealized fantasy and not a central objective of public health

5 The assertion that the government colluded with Big Pharma to get rich from Pandemics is DEBUNKED

5A How the NIH has previously dealt with Pandemics entails three basic steps 1 Go virus hunting 2 Recklessly grow those viruses and make them more dangerous 3 Make vaccines for these newly created pathogens and collude with Big Pharma to get rich

5B How the NIH has previously dealt with Pandemics included plans for public health responses building out health care infrastructure community level guidelines for risk mitigation stockpiling of vaccines antiviral drugs PPE and medical equipment et cetera as well as doing virus research and developing new vaccines or other countermeasures The document that is actually called the US Pandemic Playbook details frameworks for risk assessment rubrics for decision making and assigns different responsibilities to different government departments including Health and Human Services CDC NIH FDA ASPR BARDA et cetera USDA USAID State Labor Defense Transportation and Homeland Security as well as various intelligence agencies and the President

6 The assertion that basic biological fieldwork was not meant to discover emerging threats is DEBUNKED

6A A fictitious first step First catalog every existing pathogen by sending scientists to every remote place bat caves in China and the like take biological samples of wildlife there and bring them back to labs often located in city centers like Wuhan China

6B Basic biological fieldwork that was carried out by a series of government funded programs including the USAID PREDICT program the DARPA PREEMPT program and various NIH grants issued through the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease NIAID led by Director Anthony S Fauci These studies are not intended to catalog every existing pathogen but to conduct surveillance and discovery for emerging threats

7 The assertion that viruses were studied to find if they had ability to penetrate human cells is DEBUNKED

7A Scientists took viruses back to the lab and studied them to see if they had the ability to penetrate human cells

7B Scientists took viruses back to the lab and studied them to see if the virus had the ability to bind a receptor on a host cell to enter the cell so it can begin replicating This process is not the virus penetrating the cell physically but rather a protein on the surface of the virus particle binding a molecule on the surface of a potential host cell

8 Dangerous Gain of Function Research is a fear mongering moniker and use of this inaccurate term is DEBUNKED

8A The latter practice of studying a virus to see if it had the ability to bind to a receptor is now called dangerous gain of function D G O F research

8B Any experiments designed to test if a virus could become more pathogenic and or more transmissible were carried out under rigorous safety measures and were done to evaluate the potential threat of a particular virus

9 A crazy fear mongering description of experiments in reality done to generate important knowledge is DEBUNKED

9A This D G O F may seem crazy to the uninitiated but it is a critical step in the playbook

9B It is not crazy to perform well designed experiments that generate important knowledge on emerging viruses to assess the threat that they pose It is a reasonable and scientific approach to accurately assessing a huge risk to public health and it presents a low risk if done by properly trained experts in a biocontainment lab with proper mitigations in place for safety and security risks

10 The implication that testing is done on humans is DEBUNKED

10A The idea is to estimate the likelihood that the infectious pathogen will mutate in a way that could conceivably threaten humans

10B We do not know what viruses will do in new hosts without doing an experiment to find out Since we do not test this in humans for what I hope are obvious reasons we use molecular virology cell culture systems and animal models instead to generate data that helps assess this risk

11 The assertion that contracts are awarded to Pharmaceutical Manufacturers to develop and stockpile vaccines is DEBUNKED

11A Third having identified which few of the countless pathogens studied pose the greatest risk develop vaccines and therapeutics before they leap into human populations Crucially this step involves awarding large contracts to pharmaceutical manufacturers to develop and stockpile the countermeasures

11B Pharmaceutical manufacturers are generally not making crazy profits from vaccines for theoretical stockpiling

12 The assertion that containing a virus is not worth the risk of working in high containment is DEBUNKED

12A Every step of this agenda is fraught with risk and danger

12B There are risks to doing work in high containment Many of these can be mitigated These viruses are dangerous That is why we study them To figure out how to decrease the risk

13 The assertion that spillover occurs while doing lab work is DEBUNKED

13A The very act of sending scientists into remote places to collect pathogens risks a spillover of a pathogen that might never have occurred otherwise

13B The definition of spillover is that a spillover happens outside a lab so any risk from collecting specimens for lab use will occur in a lab under the highest containment and safety precautions

14 The assertion that working to create lifesaving vaccines is not worth the risk is DEBUNKED

14A The laboratory work even if not classified as D G O F is risky

14B Many worthwhile things are risky I for one am glad that we have vaccines Some lifesaving vaccines came from genetic engineering that seems to make these two men tremble in fear

15 Head in the sand actions like avoiding mitigatable research because it is risky is DEBUNKED

15A Even with precautions there is always a risk that a lab will inadvertently leak a pathogen that poses a catastrophic threat

15B Research related infections including some acquired in both the lab and the field do occur However there is no reason to think that the risk of a spillover occurring in the field cannot be mitigated with established methods

16 The assertion that lab leaks happen more than natural spillover is DEBUNKED

16A In fact lab leaks are common and biosafety oversight is not harmonized worldwide meaning these pathogens are often manipulated in relatively low security environments

16B Lab leaks of a virus infecting a lab worker or getting out of a lab some other way and causing an epidemic have happened They are a constant risk inherent to virus research but the risk can be mitigated They also are not common especially relative to outbreaks caused by natural spillover These are much more frequent and a much higher risk to public health

17 The assertion that a vague Trump directive that results in blocking funding for pandemic related research is helpful is DEBUNKED

17A The Trump executive order placing dangerous gain of function D G O F work under strict regulatory control helps address the problem but achieving its goals will require the entire scientific community worldwide to embrace its principles

17B The best way for scientists to improve the stated goal lab safety is for the United States to collaborate and even fund efforts around the world But by canceling grants that did this the Trump administration is encouraging the opposite of lab safety to occur The Trump Executive Order is so vaguely written that it can include almost any type of research RAWSEP Quoting from Doctor Rasmussen directly As a virologist who studies how emerging zoonotic viruses interact with their hosts and how this influences pathogenesis the process by which viruses cause disease I have an interest in virology and countermeasure research continuing because it is important The unjustified restriction of essential virology vaccine and therapeutics research is profoundly damaging to pandemic preparedness and prevention It will make us less prepared for emerging pathogens and put more lives of people lives at risk That is not a set of scientific principles I can embrace at least not without abdicating my professional integrity

18 Asserting that scientists do not already consider risks and benefits is DEBUNKED

18A All scientists must embrace a culture of careful consideration of the benefits and risks of every experiment regardless of whether it is classified as D G O F

18B Pathogen researchers already embrace a culture of careful consideration of benefits and risks All experiments in the US are under the direct oversight of an Institutional Biosafety Committee IBC The many IBCs manage and regulate all research for their institutions including conducting risk benefit analyses for every study This is routine practice for administration and oversight of all research from a biosafety standpoint Biosafety best practices already require a culture of careful consideration and it is misleading and insulting to suggest this culture does not already exist

19 The assertion that a lab leak fantasy exists is DEBUNKED

19A From a historical and evolutionary standpoint the playbook makes little sense and needs to change

19B The playbook makes little sense as described by Memoli and Bhattacharya because what Memoli and Bhattacharya are calling the playbook is a lab leak fantasy they concocted with no evidence to back it up This is not a playbook that needs to change because it is not actually a real thing that exists and the claim that the US Pandemic Playbook was essentially to find dangerous viruses make them more dangerous than cash in making vaccines for them is demonstrably false