

# FW: Important Notice from GISAID

Cheryl Bennett <cheryl@gisaid.org>

Wed 3/22/2023 2:00 AM

To: Tin, Alex <TinA@cbsnews.com>

External Email

**From:** GISAID Compliance <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 11:47 PM  
**To:** "Worobe, Michael - worobe" <[REDACTED]>, Florence Débarre <[REDACTED]>, "Edward C. Holmes" <[REDACTED]>, Kristian Andersen <[REDACTED]>, Karthik Ganavara <[REDACTED]>, Joel Wertheim <[REDACTED]>, Niema Moshiri <[REDACTED]>, Reema Singh <[REDACTED]>, Andrew Rambaut <[REDACTED]>, Angela Rasmussen <[REDACTED]>, David Robertson <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Crits-Christoph Alexander Justin <[REDACTED]>, Jonathan Pekar <[REDACTED]>, Joshua Levy <[REDACTED]>, Stephen Goldstein <[REDACTED]>, Marc Suchard <[REDACTED]>, Philippe Lemey <[REDACTED]>, "Robert F. Garry" <[REDACTED]>, Maria Van Kerkhove <[REDACTED]>, GISAID Secretariat <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Important Notice from GISAID

Dear Mike,

Thank you for acknowledging receipt of our communications and your willingness to resolve this matter expeditiously. As you know from past experience with GISAID, responsiveness has always paved the way to efficient outcomes for all parties involved. Which is why we had hoped to hear back from you or a member of your authors last week to assist us in addressing the complaint. You will agree that we must not undermine data contributors' confidence, nor our fundamental goal of ensuring free and transparent sharing of data.

Considering your response today signaling your willingness to cooperate, we lifted the temporary access restrictions as a show of goodwill.

Allow us to review all evidence from both parties. In the meantime, feel free to reach out in the event you would like to share any additional information.

Respectfully,  
The GISAID Initiative

**From:** "Worobey, Michael - (worobey)" <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 4:15 PM  
**To:** GISAID Compliance <[REDACTED]>, Florence Débarre <[REDACTED]>, "Edward C. Holmes" <[REDACTED]>, Kristian Andersen <[REDACTED]>, Karthik Gangavarapu <[REDACTED]>, Joel Wertheim <[REDACTED]>, Niema Moshiri <[REDACTED]>, Reema Singh <[REDACTED]>, Andrew Rambaut <[REDACTED]>, Angela Rasmussen <[REDACTED]>, David Robertson <[REDACTED]>

**Cc:** Crits-Christoph Alexander Justin [REDACTED], Jonathan Pekar [REDACTED], Joshua Levy [REDACTED], Stephen Goldstein [REDACTED], Marc Suchard [REDACTED], Philippe Lemey [REDACTED], "Robert F. Garry" [REDACTED], Maria Van Kerkhove [REDACTED]

**Subject:** Re: Important Notice from GISAID

Dear GISAID Compliance,

Thanks for reaching out about this matter. I am responding on behalf of all my co-authors whose accounts have been temporarily suspended.

We are happy to provide you evidence that we made best efforts to collaborate with the Originating Laboratory of these data.

Attached please find my email from Saturday, 11 March, 2023 to Dr. Pei-Pei Liu of the Chinese CDC, the submitter to GISAID of the relevant accessions, seeking collaboration. I have not yet received a response from Dr. Liu.

Also attached is an email I sent on the same day to Dr. George Gao, seeking collaboration. Dr. Gao, as you may know, is the corresponding author on the preprint posted in February 2022 on the Originating Laboratory's analyses of the data we accessed on GISAID.

Our attempts to collaborate with the Originating Laboratory continued, and included multiple verbal entreaties made by multiple members of our team, for collaboration, to the CCDC scientists who presented at a SAGO meeting about the analyses of these data, on 14 March, 2023, and provision of our email addresses and phone numbers in the "chat" of the Zoom meeting in hopes that we would be contacted.

We are eager to resolve this matter expeditiously as well, and we trust this information will do so.

Best wishes,

Mike

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Michael Worobey  
Professor and Department Head  
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology  
University of Arizona  
Tucson AZ, 85705

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**From:** GISAID Compliance [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 11:27 AM  
**To:** Florence Débarre [REDACTED], Edward C. Holmes [REDACTED], Kristian Andersen [REDACTED], Worobey, Michael - (worobey) [REDACTED], Karthik Gangavarapu [REDACTED], Joel Wertheim [REDACTED], Niema Moshiri [REDACTED], Reema Singh [REDACTED], Andrew Rambaut [REDACTED], Angela Rasmussen [REDACTED], David Robertson [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Crits-Christoph Alexander Justin [REDACTED], Jonathan [REDACTED]

Pekar [REDACTED] >, Joshua Levy [REDACTED] >, Stephen Goldstein [REDACTED] >, Marc Suchard [REDACTED] >, Philippe Lemey [REDACTED] >, Robert F. Garry [REDACTED] >, Maria Van Kerkhove [REDACTED] >

**Subject:** [EXT]Re: Important Notice from GISAID

**External Email**

Dear colleagues,  
Please be advised that your GISAID access credentials have been temporarily suspended pending investigation following complaints about your use of certain data in contravention of GISAID's Database Access Agreement.

As you know, following a complaint GISAID received from data generators affiliated with the China CDC, on 13 March 2023 we sent a request for comment (see below email thread) to each user we at that time knew to be in possession of the China CDC's data. Unfortunately, none of the replies that GISAID received came from any of the above-identified authors of "Genetic evidence of susceptible wildlife in SARS-CoV-2 positive samples at the Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market, Wuhan: Analysis and interpretation of data released by the Chinese Center for Disease Control."

We wish we could have avoided this unfortunate measure, but in order to uphold GISAID's sharing mechanism and maintain confidence that its platform is a trusted place for data contributors to see their rights respected, we were left with no other choice but to temporarily suspend your accounts when you did not respond to our 13 March 2023 message.

GISAID desires to resolve this matter expeditiously, and therefore reiterate our request that you provide any evidence of your efforts to collaborate with the representatives of the Originating Laboratory.

Respectfully,  
The GISAID Initiative

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**From:** "Secretariat (GISAID)" [REDACTED] >  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 at 6:55 PM  
**To:** Florence Débarre [REDACTED] >  
**Cc:** GISAID Compliance [REDACTED] >  
**Subject:** Important Notice from GISAID

Dear Florence,

We understand you have obtained data from GISAID that was submitted by the China CDC, whose manuscript "Surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in the environment and animal samples of the Huanan Seafood Market" (working title) is currently under review for publication by a peer-reviewed journal.

Furthermore, we understand the data generators have produced additional data for imminent release to allow a more comprehensive and improved analysis.

GISAID fully supports your research efforts, and those of all other Authorized Users, to make contributions to public health surveillance which includes, for example, your ability to present and discuss your analyses of unpublished data to a group of peers.

However, if you were to publish your analyses of un-published data before the data generator's own publication is released, *especially* if you know the data

generator submitted their own manuscript for publication, such an act would amount to scooping. Not only could this “distort[] scientific progress[,]” it could negatively impact the quality of scientific work. See Pearson, H. [It's a scoop!](#). *Nature* **426**, 222–223 (2003). Doing so would also run afoul to GISAID's Database Access Agreement, which calls on you to make best efforts to collaborate with the data generator and involve them in such analyses and further research using such data.

When GISAID sought confirmation from the data generator whether best efforts to collaborate have been made in this case, GISAID was advised that a group of researchers contacted the data generator to communicate *only* their intent to publish the data generator's data. As such, best efforts requirement has not been met. If you have evidence to the contrary or want to comment on the above, please contact us.

We appreciate your cooperation and prompt attention to this important matter.

Regards,

**The GISAID Initiative**

*Real-Time Communication in Disease Prevention*

*a Nonprofit Public-Private-Partnership*

<https://gisaid.org/>

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