

Coronavirus has mutated into at least 30 different strains, Chinese study finds

By Christopher Carbone, Fox News

The novel coronavirus has mutated into at least 30 different genetic variations, according to a new study in China.

The results showed that medical officials have vastly underestimated the overall ability of the virus to mutate, in finding that different strains have affected different parts of the world, leading to potential difficulties in finding an overall cure.

The study, which was carried out by professor Li Lanjuan and colleagues from Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China, was published in a non-peer-reviewed paper [released on Sunday](#).

The researchers analyzed the strains from 11 randomly chosen coronavirus patients from Hangzhou, where there have been 1,264 reported cases, and then tested how efficiently they could infect and kill cells. China's coronavirus numbers, however, have been questioned, as they have not been verified.

More than 30 different mutations of the virus were detected, of which 19 were previously undiscovered.

"Sars-CoV-2 has acquired mutations capable of substantially changing its pathogenicity," Li wrote in the paper.

As of Tuesday afternoon, COVID-19 has infected more than 804,000 people in the United States and killed at least 43,200. More than 4 million [tests have been conducted](#) in the US, but experts believe that number must be increased in order to reopen society. Worldwide, there are at least 2.5 million cases of the disease.

Li's team found that some of the most aggressive strains of the virus were able to generate 270 times the viral load of the weakest strains; in addition, the aggressive strains killed the human cells fastest.

According to their findings, the "true diversity" of the viral strains is underappreciated and must be understood in order to find a treatment or vaccine.

"Drug and vaccine development, while urgent, need to take the impact of these accumulating mutations, especially the founding mutations, into account to avoid potential pitfall," the authors wrote.