

2 in 3 Russians Believe Coronavirus Is a Bioweapon – Poll

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A World Health Organization (WHO) mission investigating the origins of Covid-19 has all but dismissed a theory that it came from a lab in China. **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

Nearly two out of three Russians believe the conspiracy theory that the coronavirus is a bioweapon created by humans, a survey by the independent Levada Center polling agency [said](#) Monday.

According to Levada's results, 64% of Russian respondents said Covid-19 was artificially created as a new form of biological weapon. That compares with 23% who said the virus emerged naturally and 13% who couldn't answer.

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Levada's survey also found a correlation between rapidly declining daily caseloads and Russians' fear of getting infected.

More than half, or 56%, of Russian respondents said they are not afraid of catching Covid-19 versus 43% who said they are afraid of it. That marks the lowest share of those who fear the virus since February 2020, when the pandemic had just started spreading worldwide and before Russia saw significant Covid-19 case numbers.

The figures stand in inverse proportion to October 2020, when 64% of Russians said they were afraid of catching the virus versus 34% who weren't afraid as daily infection rates began to soar.

Vaccine hesitancy is also on the rise, with 62% of respondents saying they don't want to get Russia's Sputnik V jab compared with 30% who do. Younger Russians were more skeptical of the domestically manufactured vaccine than their older counterparts by a 74-to-56 margin.

Among the most cited reasons for declining interest in Sputnik V are fears of side effects, incomplete clinical trials and the sense that "there's no point" in a vaccine, Levada said.

Still, four out of five Russians said they or someone they know had already gotten sick with Covid-19, while 28% said they have not come across anyone who got sick.

Levada conducted the survey among 1,601 respondents from 50 regions between Feb. 18-24.

Its findings come as a World Health Organization (WHO) mission investigating the origins of Covid-19 in China has all but [dismissed](#) a theory that it came from a lab in Wuhan. Scientists say the virus that causes Covid-19 most likely traveled from animal species to human populations.

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