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# False claim: Video claims COVID-19 patent has existed for years, hinting to conspiracy

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A viral video that has been posted and deleted from YouTube and other social media platforms makes the claim that old virus patents show the novel coronavirus dates back to at least 2006. These claims falsely confuse the patents for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) with COVID-19, the illness caused by the new coronavirus. SARS is also part of the coronavirus family, but it stems from a different coronavirus strain and is a different disease to COVID-19.

Reuters Fact Check. REUTERS/Axel Schmidt

SARS is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV or SARS-CoV-1) strain. COVID-19 is caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) strain. The similarity in the strains' names and the fact both are in the coronavirus family may explain the confusion and widespread sharing of the false claim.

Prior to its removal, the video had gained over 2.6 million views on YouTube as of May 7, 2020. Copies of the video, as well as its central claims, have since been reposted (examples [here](#) , [here](#) and in Spanish [here](#) ).

The video includes an introduction by Dr Rashid Buttar, a U.S. based osteopath whose videos have sparked controversy for including conspiracy-like claims, followed by multiple health claims and alleged evidence that old virus patents prove the new outbreak was known to pharmaceutical

companies years in advance.

The video makes various false health claims about the new coronavirus, including that it is a “weak” virus, that it dies at 18 degrees (presumably Celsius), and that drinking hot water, taking Vitamin C and being in the sun kills it. A past fact check addresses most of these claims [here](#) .

The video’s central claim is that old patents show this virus was somehow concealed or known of for years. The video presents two preexisting patents for the virus as evidence there is a conspiracy behind the current pandemic. The video presents two patents for this coronavirus – the American patent “US2006257852” and the European patent “EP3172319B1” (later shown as “EP3172319A1”). The patent numbers listed are indeed real, but they are for SARS, caused by SARS-CoV (or SARS-CoV-1), not for COVID-19, caused by SARS-CoV-2. They can be publicly viewed on Google [here](#) ( US2006257852A1 is a synonym for patent US2006257852, [here](#) ) , [here](#) and [here](#) . Both mention “SARS-CoV” multiple times but have no mention of “SARS-CoV-2”, the new strain causing COVID-19.

The Pirbright Institute, mentioned in the video as owning the European patent, has secured funding by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which it also lists as a major stakeholder ( [here](#) ). Its application for the patent was neither hidden nor part of a conspiracy as it was for a different virus strain entirely.

## VERDICT

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