



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

**By email**

[cj-editor@biggeesblog.cymru](mailto:cj-editor@biggeesblog.cymru)

Our ref: 19/11/21/ar/1753

24 November 2021

Dear Wynne Jones,

**Re: CJ 208 - Scientific evidence regarding the isolation, purification and sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 virus**

Thank you for your request received on 19 November 2021 addressed to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), I can confirm that the UKHSA holds the information you have specified.

***Request***

***A copy of any scientific evidence held by UKHSA confirming that the SARS-CoV-2 virus - purportedly the cause of Covid 19 infection - has been isolated, purified with its viral genome sequenced.***

***Response***

In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the Act, UKHSA can confirm it holds the information you have specified. Some of the information is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Act, as it is publicly accessible elsewhere, but we have provided links to this information for your convenience.

The UKHSA's microbiology teams use the term "isolation" to mean culture in the laboratory. It is used sometimes interchangeably to mean isolation from a patient or clinical material – but usually implies that the organism has been grown in culture. An organism is identified by looking for its unique genetic material in a clinical sample and further identification is refined and confirmed by whole genome sequencing.

The Virus Reference Laboratory at UKHSA, Colindale, London has grown the virus, SARS-CoV-2. The virus culture method has been published in the following peer-reviewed paper: <https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.32.2001483>

Several strains of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has been deposited to the European Virus Archive by UKHSA.

Please find the following links below regarding evidence of COVID-19:

- SARS-CoV-2 has been cultured and then subjected to electron microscopy. Evidence of the Electron Micrograph is available at the following link: <https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2021/02/05/what-do-we-know-about-the-new-covid-19-variants/>
- General information pertaining to SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease known as COVID-19: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-background-information/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-epidemiology-virology-and-clinical-features>
- [A Novel Coronavirus from Patients with Pneumonia in China, 2019 | NEJM](#) provides the methodology of isolating the virus and conducting viral genome sequencing.

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to the Information Rights Team in writing in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied and would like to request an internal review, then please contact us at the address above or by emailing [InformationRights@UKHSA.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRights@UKHSA.gov.uk).

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if a complaint cannot be resolved through the PHE complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted by calling the ICO's helpline on 0303 123 1113, visiting the ICO's website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk) or writing to the ICO at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely  
Information Rights Team