

Hotez Refuses to Debate RFK on Vaccines

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

✓ Fact Checked

June 30, 2023

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › June 15, 2023, podcast host Joe Rogan interviewed Robert F. Kennedy Jr. about his bid for president and his views on vaccines
- › Vaccine scientist Dr. Peter Hotez lashed out against Rogan and Kennedy on Twitter, accusing them of spreading misinformation
- › Rogan invited Hotez to debate Kennedy on his show in return for a \$100,000 donation to his charity of choice. Later, other members of the public raised the pot to more than \$1.5 million
- › Hotez went on MSNBC, stating he wasn't willing to participate in an event that would get turned into "The Jerry Springer Show" by having Kennedy there. So, Hotez will only appear on shows that cannot challenge his claims
- › Hotez funded controversial and risky gain-of-function research on coronaviruses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), from which SARS-CoV-2 emerged

June 15, 2023, podcast host Joe Rogan interviewed¹ Democratic presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. for three hours. Contrary to so many other interviewers, Rogan allowed Kennedy ample time to discuss his views on vaccines without interruptions.

The facts laid out by Kennedy apparently rubbed vaccine scientist [Dr. Peter Hotez](#)² the wrong way. In a June 17 tweet, Hotez posted a Vice article titled "Spotify has Stopped Even Sort of Trying to Stem Joe Rogan's Vaccine Misinformation."

Addressing the author of that smear piece, Hotez stated, “It’s really true @annamerian just awful. And from all the online attacks I’m receiving after this absurd podcast, it’s clear many actually believe this nonsense.” Never mind the fact that Hotez, in April 2020, was allowed to argue his pro-vaccine stance on Rogan’s show.³

Hotez’s fly-by smear attempt set off an extended back-and-forth Twitter exchange between Hotez, Rogan and Kennedy. In the video above, comedian Jimmy Dore reviews those exchanges.

Rogan Offers Hotez \$100K to Debate Kennedy

Rogan replied to Hotez’ tweet, saying, “Peter, if you claim what RFK Jr. is saying is ‘misinformation,’ I am offering you \$100,000.00 to the charity of your choice if you’re willing to debate him on my show with no time limit.”

Kennedy also chimed in, tweeting, “Peter. Let’s finally have the respectful, congenial, informative debate that the American people deserve.” Hotez replied to Rogan, “Joe, you have my cell, my email, I’m always willing to speak with you.”

Rogan, in turn, replied “This is a non-answer. I challenged you publicly because you publicly quote tweeted and agreed with that dogshit Vice article. If you’re serious about what you stand for, you now have a massive opportunity for a debate that will reach the largest audience a discussion like this has ever had. If you think someone else is better qualified, suggest that person.”

Hotez came back at Rogan: “Joe, if you are serious about addressing vaccines + the fact that 200,000 unvaccinated Americans needlessly perished during our awful delta/BA.1 COVID waves ... because they fell victims to vaccine disinformation: I want to have that discussion.”

So, he’s willing to go on Rogan’s show again — by himself. But not with someone who knows the science well enough to challenge his claims.

Hotez Co-Funded Controversial Coronavirus Research

As noted by comedian Dore, Hotez will never agree to a public debate on vaccines, especially considering we now have evidence^{4,5} showing he **funded risky gain-of-function (GoF) research on coronaviruses** at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), from which SARS-CoV-2 emerged, all while vehemently arguing that COVID-19 could not possibly have come from a lab, and anyone who thinks so is a tinfoil hat-wearing kook.

Hotez's dismissal of the lab escape theory is particularly ironic considering he received a \$6.1 million grant⁶ from the National Institutes of Health in 2012 for the development of a SARS vaccine in case of an "accidental release from a laboratory," "deliberate spreading of the virus by a terrorist attack," or a zoonotic spillover event.

So, clearly, Hotez is no stranger to the possibility of lab leaks. He just doesn't want anyone else to consider it. In fact, Hotez is apparently so fearful of public discussion that he's called for scientists, like himself, to be protected under hate crime laws, basically making it a criminal offense to question science. Considering how often Hotez has been caught spreading misinformation, that would obviously be useful.

Is Hotez Ever Correct?

As an example of Hotez's repeat offenses, Dore plays a compilation video of Hotez, starting with Hotez pointing out there are "unique potential safety problems" related to coronavirus vaccines in 2020. Then, something happened and Hotez never admitted the possibility of safety problems again.

Instead, he started pushing the single-dose Janssen shot, which later got pulled in several countries due to life-threatening blood clots. Then he started pushing the two-dose mRNA shots, saying they offer "long-lasting" protection. Then, when the boosters rolled out, he switched to saying "I've always said this is a three-dose vaccine."

Then, he argued "a fourth immunization" would be necessary "to keep the country going." And when hospitals continued to fill up with COVID patients, he told people to get

the bivalent booster.

After that, he started saying yearly boosters would be necessary, only to later change his mind saying we may need a booster “every few months,” because the boosters “aren’t holding up as well as we’d like.”

He also pushed the COVID jab on young children, claiming COVID was “picking off young people like we’ve never seen [before].” With a track record like that, proving yourself wrong every few months, criminalizing critique would surely be nice.

Hotez Refuses to Debate RFK



Rogan replied to Hotez, “Again, I’m going to ask you very clearly, are you willing to debate Robert Kennedy Jr. on my podcast?” Twitter owner Elon Musk got in on the

action, tweeting that Hotez won't debate Kennedy "because he knows he's wrong."

Other Twitter users and members of the public then decided to sweeten Rogan's initial offer by adding their own donations, and by 9 a.m. EST on June 18, the pot had reached \$1.52 million. Still, Hotez could not be tempted to stand up and defend his claims.

“ How can we possibly trust the so-called experts if they don't even have the ability to defend their own positions? ~ Collin Rugg, Twitter ”

Instead, he went on the MSNBC show Rising Reacts and said he wasn't willing to participate in an event that would get turned into "The Jerry Springer Show" by having Kennedy there.

As noted by Twitter user Collin Rugg, "How can we possibly trust the so-called experts if they don't even have the ability to defend their own positions?" and Richard Welch, who tweeted, "They can't be wrong if they're never debated. The echo chamber is good for their sanity and credibility."

Meanwhile, mainstream media continues its effort to undermine Kennedy, not by countering his statements with actual evidence, but rather through character assassination.

In the video above, now-independent reporter and political commentator Tucker Carlson reviews how Rogan's interview with Kennedy unleashed a "full-blown category-5 hysteria typhoon" in mainstream media, which resorted to describing Kennedy as a "lunatic, Nazi and extremist supporter," simply for questioning the role vaccines may play in the massive rise in allergies, autism and chronic diseases among children.

Hotez, One of the Most Shockingly Hateful People in Medicine

Hotez has made headlines a number of times through the years, typically delivering some kind of hateful rhetoric. He's publicly stated he wants to "snuff out" vaccine skeptics,⁷ for example, and in May 2021 [called for cyberwarfare measures](#) to be deployed against people who share vaccine safety information.⁸

Hotez has repeatedly spewed vitriol at parents of vaccine-injured children, and called for physical harm and imprisonment of people who don't agree with the one-size-fits-all vaccine agenda.

He's not above casting an evil eye on other scientists either. As reported by journalist Paul Thacker in an August 9, 2022, Substack article titled, "Peter Hotez Sees Aggression Everywhere But in the Mirror":⁹

"Patrolling scientific discourse, Hotez has a knack for discovering 'antiscience' in anyone who disagrees with him. Jeffrey Sachs, economics professor at Columbia University and chair of an international commission on COVID-19, charged in a wide-ranging interview¹⁰ ... that the National Institutes of Health and allied scientists were impeding an investigation into how the COVID-19 pandemic started ...

Hotez went on the assault, tweeting that Sachs, as leader of the Lancet Commission, did not represent the views of science. Much like a Pentagon general wrapping himself in freedom and the flag to demand more federal monies for another foreign war ... Hotez has been shrouding himself in the mantle of science to denigrate anyone who questions taxpayer funding for dangerous virus research by the National Institutes of Health."

In his article,¹¹ Thacker goes on to review several other bizarre incidences involving Hotez. For example, he referred to the scientific experts invited to testify before Congress as "fringe elements" testifying and promoting "outlandish conspiracies." So much for Ph.D.s and med school. He also accused Sen. Rand Paul of promoting conspiracies.

Here's the take-home: The reason Hotez rails against "antiscience" is because he can sense the danger the research community and vaccine industry are in.

If SARS-CoV-2 is conclusively proven to be a lab creation, it would put a massive spotlight on scientists involved in dual purpose viral research. Gain-of-function research may be banned altogether (as it should), which would sink many a career, including his own.

Similarly, public acknowledgement that the COVID jabs are a public health disaster would permanently and perhaps lethally injure the vaccine industry. So, all that hateful rhetoric, and the refusal to have a discussion with anyone of an opposing view? It really comes down to protecting his own self-serving interests.

Sources and References

- ¹ [Spotify The Joe Rogan Experience #1999](#)
- ² [Uncaptured Substack January 26, 2023](#)
- ³ [Spotify The Joe Rogan Experience #1451](#)
- ⁴ [USRTK August 9, 2022](#)
- ⁵ [A Midwestern Doctor Substack June 18, 2023](#)
- ⁶ [NIH Grant Project No. 4R01AI098775-05](#)
- ⁷ [Scientific American March 3, 2017](#)
- ⁸ [Nature April 27, 2021](#)
- ^{9, 11} [Substack Paul Thacker August 9, 2022](#)
- ¹⁰ [Jeff Sachs August 2, 2022](#)