



Spot Report : Long COVID

The findings highlight the complicated nature of COVID-19's effects on people's health, and the range of longer-term consequences emerging in what some experts are referring to as Long COVID. This recent study is the largest to date of such extended effects among hospitalized patients; while it suggests that about half of patients with serious COVID-19 recover from their symptoms, the other half and especially those who were sicker during their hospitalization may continue to battle the mental and physical effects of the virus for over a year.

Most evidence about long COVID has been limited and based on small cohorts with short follow-up. However, in *The Lancet*, Lixue Huang and colleagues report 12-month outcomes from the largest longitudinal cohort of hospitalized adult survivors of COVID-19 so far. Including adults (median age 59 years) discharged from Jin Yin-tan Hospital in Wuhan, China, this study advances our understanding of the nature and extent of long COVID. At 1 year, COVID-19 survivors had more mobility problems, pain or discomfort, and anxiety or depression than control participants (matched community-dwelling adults without SARS-CoV-2 infection).

Symptoms of long COVID

There are lots of symptoms you can have after a COVID-19 infection.

Common long COVID symptoms include:

- extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- shortness of breath
- chest pain or tightness
- problems with memory and concentration ("brain fog")
- difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- heart palpitations
- dizziness
- pins and needles
- joint pain
- depression and anxiety
- tinnitus, earaches
- feeling sick, diarrhea, stomach aches, loss of appetite
- a high temperature, cough, headaches, sore throat, changes to sense of smell or taste
- rashes

How will I know I have long Covid?

There is currently no test - instead it is currently a "diagnosis of exclusion", according to Dr Strain, with doctors first ruling out other possible causes.

They test for other issues like diabetes, thyroid function and iron deficiency, before offering a diagnosis. A blood test for long Covid could become available in the future. And in research settings more sophisticated tools are already being used to identify organ damage - but you won't be able to get these at a standard GP appointment.



Can the vaccine help?

Roughly half of people with long Covid reported an improvement in their symptoms after being jabbed possibly by resetting their immune response or helping the body attack any remaining fragments of the virus, say experts.

Vaccination can also help prevent people contracting the virus and developing long Covid in the first place.

What treatments are available?

In England, 89 specialist long Covid assessment centers have been set up.

Similar clinics are expected to open in Northern Ireland in the coming months, while in Scotland and Wales patients will be referred to different services by their GPs, depending on their symptoms. At the moment there are no proven drug treatments and the main focus is on managing symptoms and gradually increasing activity. A formal clinical trial into drug treatments is expected to launch soon.

ACMM Recommendation

Armed Force Personnel experienced some symptoms of long COVID may cause shortened duration of exercise that affect effectiveness of mission. health care provider could relieve such complication by early detection, Longterm follow up and sustained rehabilitation (Physical and mental) in post COVID19 personnel.

Reference

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