

Post Covid Patients Are Experiencing Neurological Problems

Sufficient time has passed since the first wave of patients were diagnosed with COVID-19 to commence a study of the longer term symptoms. Some symptoms appeared soon after COVID-19 onset, such as myalgia and headache, while others had a delayed onset, such as sensory symptoms and psychiatric disorders.

Most patients recover from COVID-19 within a few weeks, but some exhibit persistent or new symptoms more than four weeks after first being diagnosed, with some displaying symptoms up to nine months later.

Neuropsychiatric Symptoms

A study, published in *Brain Communications* 2021, examined a cohort of 245 adult COVID-19 patients. The most frequent neuropsychiatric symptoms were motor weakness, cognitive disturbances, impaired consciousness, psychiatric disturbance, headache and behavioral disturbance.

FAIR Health, a US company that collects data on health insurance, studied the insurance records of almost 2 million COVID-19 patients between February 2020 and February 2021. The major findings of the study were:

* A month after diagnosis the major post-COVID symptoms were pain, breathing difficulties, fatigue, malaise and hypertension

* The most common mental health conditions reported were anxiety, depression and adjustment disorders

* Robin Gelburd, President of FAIR Health said, "A surprisingly large percentage (19%) of asymptomatic patients were in the category described as 'long-haul' COVID." Long-haul COVID-19 was defined as symptoms persisting for more than 6 weeks.

The 6 most common complaints among long-haul participants were:

- Cognitive dysfunction, also called 'brain fog', reported by 81%
- Headache 68%
- Numbness or tingling, 60%
- Loss of taste, 59%
- Loss of smell, 55%
- Blurred Vision, 30%

Theories about the cause of long-haul COVID include: persistent immune activation after the acute phase, initial damage from the virus, such as damage to nerve pathways that are slow to heal, and persistent presence of low-level virus.

Take Home Message: Keep masking and use disinfectants as advised, and be aware that COVID infections of low viral load can have long term complications.

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