



# Mental Health Impact of Long-COVID: Implications and Approaches of Care

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# Disclosures

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Nothing to disclose.

# Learning Objectives

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- Describe the impact of Long COVID on mental health
- Identify vulnerable populations who may experience a disproportional impact of mental health/wellness concerns due to Long COVID
- Identify an array of strategies for supporting mental wellbeing and health in patients whose lives are impacted by Long COVID
- Assess treatment options and best recommendations in this population
- Describe the impact on health care workers and burn out in working with patients with Long Covid

# Post-Infectious Fatiguing Illnesses

- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS)
- Post-Viral Syndrome
- Autoimmune/inflammatory syndrome
- Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS)
- Mass Cell Activation (MCAS)
- Post Intensive Care Syndrome (PICS)



# Risk Factors

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## HEALTH

- Comorbid Conditions
- Hypertension, high blood pressure, obesity, poor general health, immunosuppression
- Psychiatric Conditions

## ILLNESS SEVERITY

- Initial Symptoms
- Prolonged Hospitalizations
- ICU Admission
- \*Most were never hospitalized

# Vulnerable Populations

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## Gender

- 1.5 High Odds for Females (Thompson et al., 2021)

## Age

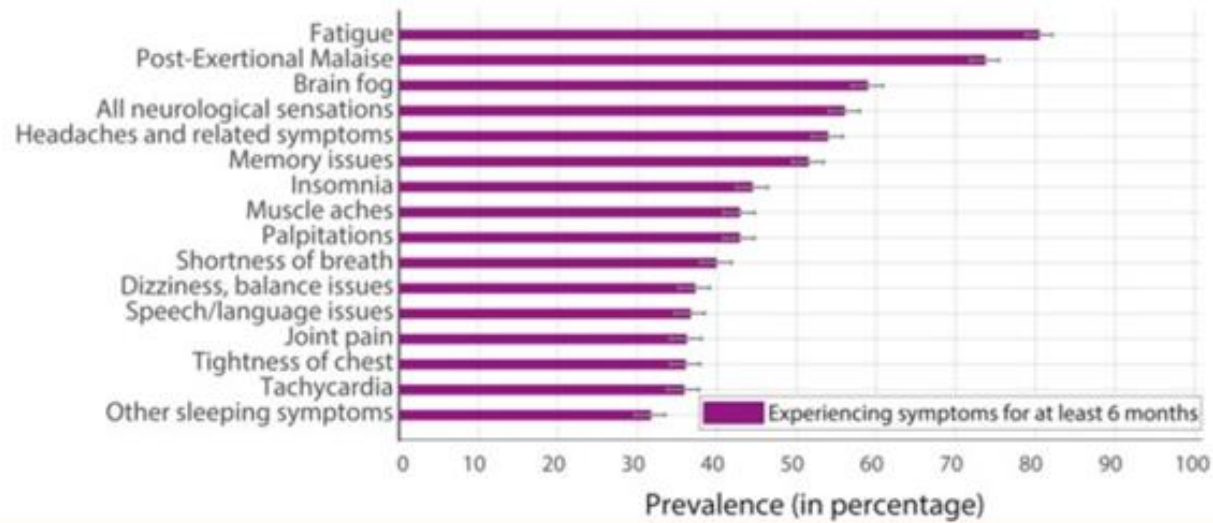
- Increase up to age 70 than decrease (Thompson et al., 2021)
- Younger age may be more predictive of dysguisia and dysosmia

# Vulnerable Populations

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- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals
  - Have an increased risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2, worse clinical outcomes, including ITU admission and mortality, in BAME patients compared to White patients.
  - Poorer clinical outcomes
- (Pan et al., 2020).

a. Remaining symptoms after month 6 (prevalence > 30%)



Davis et al., 2021



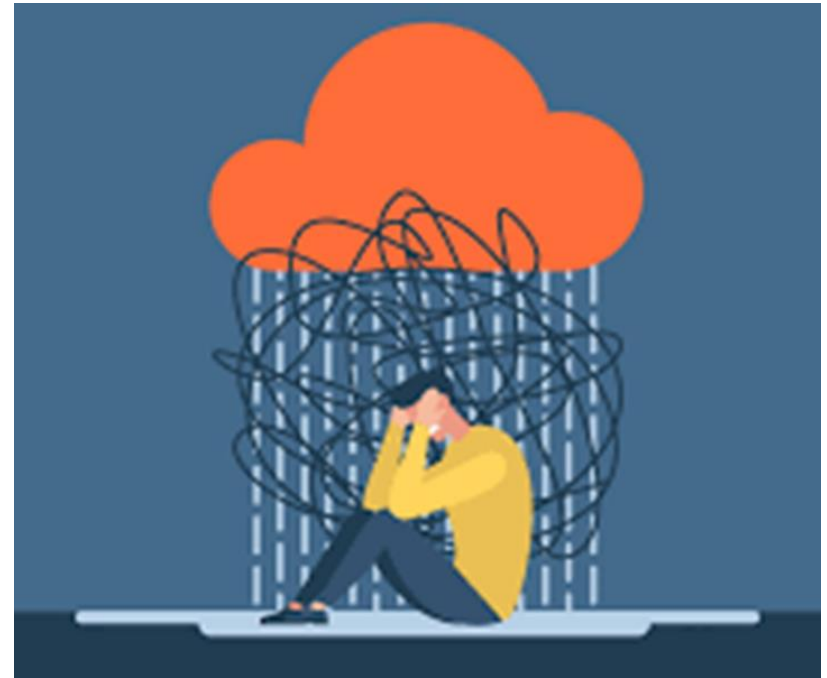
## Most Common Mental Health Concerns (Rossi Ferrario et al.)

- most common post COVID-19 psychological issues were
- acute stress disorders (18.6%)
- anxious and demoralization symptoms (26.7%)
- depression (10.5%)
- troublesome grief (8.1%)

Psychiatric distress and functional decline are also common

35% of COVID-19 survivors producing at least one moderately elevated score across measures of anxiety, depression, trauma, and functional decline.

One in four patients requiring treatment in the ICU reported trauma-related distress.



## Psychiatric Distress and Decline

# Other Contributors Impacting Mental Health

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## ADL'S

- economic losses/loss of job
- increased responsibility towards children and other family members
- closure of daycares/schools/workplace

## SOCIAL

- Lack of social support
- Loneliness

# Treatment Strategies for Primary Care

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- Screen for symptoms
  - Patient reported checklist
  - Mood Screeners
  - Refer to Neuropsychological Evaluation for cognitive testing
  - Autonomic Testing to evaluate for Dysautonomia
  - Speech - Cognitive Remediation Therapy
  - Physical – Postural Instability, Falls Prevention, Exertion Tolerance, etc.
  - Pharmacological treatment Examples
    - Anti histamines
    - Beta-blockers
    - Ivabradine
    - Clonidine
    - Midodrine

# Screening - Mental Health

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## Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-Item Screener (GAD-7)

- 5 Mild
- 10 Moderate
- 15 Severe

## Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)

- 5-9 Mild
- 10-14 Moderate
- 15-19 Moderately Severe
- 20-27 Severe

## Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist for Civilians (PCL-C)

- A cutoff score of 50 has demonstrated good sensitivity (.78 to .82) and specificity (.83 to .86)
- \*\*Recommend looking at this more to assess for trauma reaction than to diagnose

# Cognitive Treatment Strategies

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- Neuropsychological Evaluation
- Stimulant Medication
- Activating Antidepressant
- Cognitive Remediation Therapy
- Build routines
- Organization
- Limit Distractions
- Build in Extra Time
- Pacing
- Referral to Speech Therapy for Cognitive Rehabilitation



## Behavioral Treatment Strategies

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- Reduce Carbohydrate heavy meals
- Low Histamine Diet
- Heat
- Minimizing caffeine and alcohol
- Hydrate: >3 liters water/day
- Salt Intake: 5-10 grams sodium/day
- Sleep Hygiene



# Behavioral Treatment Strategies

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- Review coping strategies to help promote better mood
- Relaxation Strategies (deep breathing, meditation, grounding techniques, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation)
  - Deep Breathing with caution
- Yoga
- Gratitude exercise: List 3 things you are grateful for at the beginning or end of each day



# Physician Burnout

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- Burnout vs. Compassion Fatigue
- Compassion fatigue- exposure to prolonged stressful or traumatic events
- Burnout- systemic/ hazard in difficult organizational environments

- Disaster Distress Helpline
  - 800-985-5990
  - Text Help to 66746
- National Suicide Prevention & Crisis Lifeline
  - 988 / 800-273-TALK / 800-273-8255 (phone or text)
- Crisis Text Line
  - 741741
- Physician Support Line
  - 888-409-0141
- Emotional PPE (free care for HCWs)
  - [emotionalppe.org](http://emotionalppe.org)

*Questions?*