

Long-COVID and Mental Health Impacts

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Objectives: Participants will be able to

- Define possible mental health outcomes of COVID-19 and Long-COVID.
- Understand the complexity of Long-COVID mental health symptoms.
- Describe potential evaluation and treatment of mental health symptoms related to Long-COVID.

Long-COVID related Mental Health Diagnoses & Symptoms

Diagnoses:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- PTSD
- OCD, panic attacks

Symptoms:

- Sleep problems
- Substance abuse
- Distress, Low quality of life

Time Course of mental health symptoms

- ❑ Unclear – more studies needed
- ❑ Studies to date have examined mental health symptoms 4 to 6 months post-COVID diagnosis
- ❑ Unclear also whether and to what extent mental health symptoms are related to severity and duration of COVID-19 infection
- ❑ Expectation of recovery from all symptoms, including mental health, is unclear

Complexity of Mental Health diagnoses with Long-COVID

- COVID-19 symptoms and diagnosis
 - ▣ may exacerbate existing mental health diagnoses and concerns
 - ▣ may contribute to new psychiatric diagnosis(es) and concerns
- Co-occurring and potentially exacerbating symptoms:
 - ▣ Sleep problems
 - ▣ Substance abuse
 - ▣ Grief
 - ▣ Families devastated by COVID-19
 - ▣ Psychosocial concerns: financial, occupational, social, racial/ethnic & community stressors

Link between physical and mental health functioning

- ❑ Persistent Long-COVID symptoms appear to impact physical and cognitive function, health-related quality of life, and participation in society (Tabacof, et al., 2022) – most common symptom exacerbation triggers included stress and patients reported higher anxiety and depression symptoms compared to pre-COVID medical history.
- ❑ Neuroinflammation plays a role (Mazza, et al., 2020; Ramakrishnan, 2021)
- ❑ For most patients in the multidisciplinary Long-Covid Mayo Clinic (Vanichkachorn et al, 2021), laboratory and imaging tests showed no abnormalities or were nondiagnostic despite debilitating symptoms

Evaluation of mental health symptoms

Screening of mental health symptoms

- Depressed mood or depression (<https://www.apa.org/depression-guideline/assessment>): PHQ2, PHQ9, GDS (30 or 15 item), BDI-II
- Anxiety (<https://div12.org/assessment-tools-anxiety-symptoms/>): GAD7, BAI, etc.
- PTSD (<https://istss.org/clinical-resources>): PCL5, PC-PTSD5 (Primary care), etc.
- Sleep (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4661454/>): Epworth Sleepiness Scale, Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, etc.

Treatments

- Individual <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/mental-health-psychotherapy>): CBT, CBTi, supportive, psychodynamic, interpersonal, DBT, mindfulness, ACT, etc.
- Group: Long-COVID support groups
- Peer-support: <https://www.wearebodypolitic.com/covid-19>
- Phone/computer apps: <https://www.verywellmind.com/best-apps-for-anxiety-3575736>,
- Alternative/CAM <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/complementary-alternative-or-integrative-health-whats-in-a-name>): meditation, massage, biofeedback, yoga, Reiki, homeopathy, etc.

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