

Letter to the Editor

Long-COVID

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Most lay- or non-medical individuals would interpret the term ‘Long-COVID’ as referring to the lingering symptoms or extended manifestations over a period of time longer than normal of the disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). By contrast, many studious infectious doctors and other medical professionals speak from knowledge gained from research or their own experience that approximately one in eight patients, whose other pathogenic manifestations of variable organ systems, such as loss of the sense of taste and/or smell, difficulty in breathing, chest pain while breathing, painful muscles, tingling hands/feet, a lump in the throat, alternating feeling of hot and cold, heavy arms and/or legs, and general tiredness, developed after those patients had COVID-19, with most such manifestations lasting between three and five months. Based on the differences in the frequency of such symptoms in patients who had COVID-19 and the control group in one study, 12.7 per cent of the COVID-19 patients had Long-COVID symptoms.

It should be noted that based on the results of studies on more than 4,200 participants who had COVID-19 obtained during the period when the Alpha and other early variants of the coronavirus were in circulation, it was found that a negligible number of people in the study had a COVID-19 vaccination prior to contracting the disease. Because the study was done before the emergence of the highly transmissible Omicron variants and before widespread use of COVID-19 vaccines, the above situation may not apply to the situation today. However, researchers suggest that vaccination reduces the risk of developing Long-COVID.

It should be further noted that Dr. Aaron Friedberg, an internist at Ohio State University’s Wexner Medical Center in the city of Columbus, claimed that most patients with Long-COVID have had the previously mentioned symptoms for a minimum of four

weeks, with some having had them for a period ranging from three months to as long as two years. He remarked that currently there is high baseline level of protection in the population, so it is somewhat unusual nowadays for someone to get COVID-19 who has never received a vaccine.

Newly added information is that additional symptoms of long-COVID include 'brain fog,' the so-called "post-exertion malaise" after physical or mental exertion, and depression or anxiety. One study found that over half of COVID-19 patients have had some kind of cognitive impairment a year after being discharged from the hospital.

Of further note: Cedars-Sinai Investigators found that people with prior SARS-CoV-2 infection have a wide variety of auto-antibodies in their blood stream up to six months after they have fully recovered from COVID-19 . These patterns of immune dysregulation could be underlying the different types of persistent symptoms in people who go on to develop the condition referred to as Long-COVID.

Documents used for preparing the above note were obtained from <https://www.healthline.com/health-news/what-we-know-about-your-risk-of-getting-long-COVID>; and <https://scitechdaily.com/covid-19-can-trigger-self-attacking-antibodies-even-in-people-that-had-no-symptoms-of-infection/>