* SUMMARY AND COMMENT |
* [INFECTIOUS DISEASES](https://www.jwatch.org/infectious-diseases)

**INFORMING PRACTICE**

April 21, 2021

**Mild COVID-19 Is Not Necessarily Benign**

[*Carlos del Rio, MD*](https://www.jwatch.org/editors/AU022?editor=Carlos%2520del%2520Rio,%2520MD)*, reviewing Havervall S et al. JAMA 2021 Apr 7*

*Eight months after contracting mild COVID-19, many healthcare workers reported persistent symptoms and functional impairment.*

Substantial numbers of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 have lingering symptoms several months after discharge. What happens after mild disease? Researchers in Sweden invited healthcare professionals with mild COVID-19 (age range, 33–56; 85% women) to complete baseline questionnaires and have blood samples tested every 4 months for SARS-CoV-2 anti-spike IgG. At the 8-month follow up, 323 seropositive and 1072 seronegative participants reported on persistence, severity, and duration of 23 predefined symptoms. Underlying chronic conditions were reported by 23% of participants regardless of serostatus.

At least 1 moderate-to-severe symptom lasting ≥2 months was reported by 26% (seropositive) versus 9% (seronegative) participants; symptoms lasting ≥8 months were reported by 15% versus 3% of seropositive and seronegative participants, respectively. The most common symptoms reported by seropositive participants were anosmia, fatigue, ageusia, and dyspnea. Seropositive participants reported that persistent symptoms moderately to markedly disrupted their work life (8%), social life (15%), or home life (12%).

**COMMENT**

This study confirms that even mild COVID is not necessarily benign, as approximately one quarter of these low-risk individuals with mild COVID-19 reported persistent symptoms 2 months after illness that negatively affected daily lives. Understanding the pathogenesis of and potential therapeutic interventions for this condition, now known as post-acute COVID-19 syndrome, is urgently needed.

**EDITOR DISCLOSURES AT TIME OF PUBLICATION**

**Disclosures for Carlos del Rio, MD, at time of publication**

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Havervall S et al. Symptoms and functional impairment assessed 8 months after mild COVID-19 among health care workers. *JAMA* 2021 Apr 7; [e-pub]. (<https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2021.5612>)



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Chief Editor, HIV/AIDS

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