Indigenous Wellness A Conversation on Long Covid

Defining Long COVID (also known as Post-COVID or Post-Acute Sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC))

Post-COVID Condition (PCC) is a medical syndrome in which there is a "lack of return to a usual state of health following acute COVID-19 illness." (CDC - Centers for Disease Control)

- In addition to any symptom/diagnosis codes, please use ICD-10: "Post COVID Condition" U09.9 (as of October 2021)

Criteria:
- Prior COVID-19 illness (confirmed or presumed)
- Lingering symptoms or health effects (usually considered 1-3 months)

Evaluation & Management of Common Symptoms

Fatigue: look for mimickers/ exclude treatable causes such as Anemia, B12 deficiency, iron deficiency, Vit D deficiency, thyroid disorders, myositis, adrenal insufficiency.

Fatigue Treatment:
- Treating overexertion
- Education about pacing
- Referral for a movement program, with experienced therapists (PT, OT)
  - Work accommodations:
    - Treating depression
    - Treating sleep disorders
    - Might benefit activating antidepressants, stimulants (esp. with cognitive dysfunction)

Dysautonomia (POTS): look for Orthostatic vital signs, symptom diary, smart watches, Cardiac evaluation.

Dysautonomia Treatment:
- Hydration
- Compression stockings
- Avoid exacerbating factors
- Recumbent exercise

Dysautonomia Pharmacologic Treatment:
- Beta blockers
- Fludrocortisone
- Ivabradine-cardio specific
- Pyridostigmine
- Clonidine

Respiratory: Dyspnea and cough are common. Consider diagnosis of Pulmonary Embolism after Covid-19.

Pulmonary Symptom Treatment:
- Cough
  - Usual treatment for post viral cough
  - Low threshold for a steroid inhaler
  - Often Improves
- Dyspnea
  - Breathing exercises
  - PT/Respiratory Rehab
  - Pulmonology referral as indicated
Pain: Myalgias/Arthralgias pain is common and wide ranging. Cognitive dysfunction, headaches, dizziness, and tremors are also common.\textsuperscript{2,4}

Pain Pharmacologic Neuropathic Treatment:
- Gabapentin
- Pregabalin
- TCA (amitriptyline)
- SNRI (venlafaxine, mirtazapine)

Pain Pharmacologic Myalgia/Arthralgias Treatment: Consider rheumatology consultation.
- Curcumin (turmeric)
- Supplementation for anti-inflammatory benefits
- NSAIDs
- Steroid burst
- Topical meds (diclofenac)

Neurologic and Cognitive Treatment:\textsuperscript{2}
- Similar to approach to fatigue – minimize triggers, allow for rest breaks, reduced work intensity.
- Speech therapy for cognitive rehabilitation
- Neuropsychology testing may be helpful
- Stimulants (methylphenidate, dextroamphetamine, modafinil) have been helpful. Additionally, guanfacine has shown early promising results.

### Magnifying Health Disparities\textsuperscript{5}

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vulnerable populations are more likely to...</th>
<th>Vulnerable populations are less likely to...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hold frontline (essential) jobs, increasing exposure to virus</td>
<td>Be vaccinated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Live in multigenerational homes or crowded locations</td>
<td>Access testing during acute illness, which is often required Long COVID specialty clinics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have pre-existing conditions known to increase illness severity</td>
<td>Receive acute COVID treatments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Require hospitalization</td>
<td>Access specialist healthcare including Long COVID clinics</td>
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### Educational Guidance & Resources
References


