

Are certain patient characteristics linked with long-term health effects of COVID-19?

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Many studies have described a variety of long-term effects of COVID-19, with symptoms including fatigue and malaise, breathing difficulties, and cognitive problems, often referred to as post COVID-19 condition or long COVID. A recent analysis in the *Journal of Internal Medicine* has identified several characteristics associated with a higher likelihood of receiving a post COVID-19 condition diagnosis.

In the study of 204,805 [individuals](#) who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 in Stockholm, Sweden from March 2020 through July 2021, the proportion receiving a post COVID-19 condition diagnosis was 1% among individuals not hospitalized for their COVID-19 infection, 6% among hospitalized, and 32% among individuals treated in intensive care units (ICUs). The most common new-onset symptoms among individuals with a post COVID-19 condition diagnosis were fatigue (29%) among non-hospitalized individuals, and breathing difficulties among both hospitalized (25%) and ICU-treated patients (41%).

Female sex, previous mental health disorders, and asthma were associated with post COVID-19 condition among non-hospitalized and hospitalized individuals.

Among individuals with post COVID-19 condition, use of outpatient care was substantially elevated up to one year after the acute infection.

"Our understanding of health effects beyond the acute SARS-CoV-2 infection is continuously improving. In this study, we observed a marked difference in the occurrence of post COVID-19 condition [diagnosis](#) across different severities of the [acute infection](#)," said corresponding author Pontus Hedberg, MD and postdoctoral researcher at Karolinska Institutet. "Furthermore, the elevated outpatient primary and specialist care use indicates poor recovery for individuals suffering from post COVID-19 condition, highlighting the urgent need to better understand this condition and its potential resolution over time."

More information: Post COVID-19 condition diagnosis: A population-based cohort study of occurrence, associated factors, and healthcare use by severity of acute infection, *Journal of Internal Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/joim.13584](https://doi.org/10.1111/joim.13584)

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