

Nearly 1 in 10 COVID Patients Seek Treatment for Long-Term Symptoms

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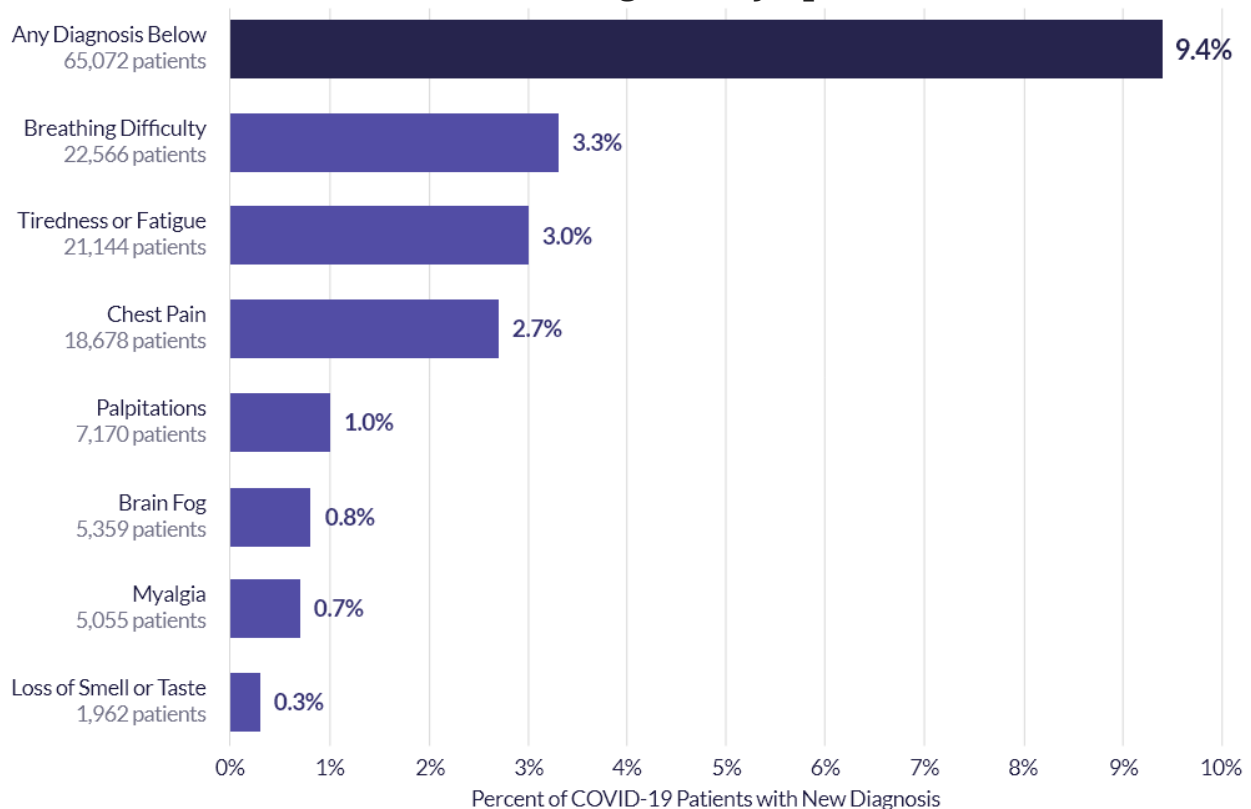
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Abstract: 9.4% of patients diagnosed with COVID-19 sought treatment for symptoms that might indicate long-haul COVID.

To better understand the prevalence of long-haul symptoms after COVID-19 infection, we studied 693,375 patients diagnosed with COVID-19 who did not have prior indication of a long-haul symptom before their COVID positivity. We found that 9.4% sought treatment after their diagnosis for symptoms that might indicate long-haul COVID^{1,2,3} as shown in Figure 1.

Percent of COVID-19 Patients with Long-Haul Symptom



"Percent of COVID-19 Patients with Long-Haul Symptom" 2021. Epic Health Research Network (EHRN.org)

Figure 1. Percentage of patients seeking treatment four weeks to six months after their COVID-19 diagnosis for symptoms that might represent long-haul COVID.

The most common diagnosis was breathing difficulty, while loss of smell or taste was the least common. The different rates of individual diagnoses might represent a difference in patients' likelihood to seek treatment for that condition and not in how prevalent those symptoms are in the population, as our analysis is limited to symptoms reported during an encounter with a healthcare provider. We also found that female patients were more likely than male patients to have a new diagnosis consistent with long-haul COVID: 63.5% of patients with such a diagnosis were female.

These long-haul COVID diagnoses were also more prevalent in patients who had been hospitalized for COVID-19, with 15.4% of previously admitted patients and only 8.4% of non-admitted patients seeking treatment for any of the diagnoses included in the study.

These data come from Cosmos, a HIPAA Limited Data Set of more than 112 million patients from Epic customers. This study was completed by two teams, comprised of clinicians and data scientists, that independently acquired and analyzed data. Overall, the two teams came to similar conclusions. Data are pooled from 109 healthcare organizations representing 538 hospitals and 8,798 clinics during the cohort formation period.

References

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Data Definitions

Term	Definition
Tiredness or fatigue	Diagnosis codes R53.1, R53.81, R53.82, R53.83
Loss of smell or taste	Diagnosis codes R43.0, R43.1, R43.2, R43.8, R43.9
Palpitations	Diagnosis code R00.2
Chest pain	Diagnosis codes R07.1, R07.2, R07.81, R07.82, R07.89, R07.9
Breathing difficulty	Diagnosis codes R06.00, R06.01, R06.02, R06.09, R06.9
Myalgia	Diagnosis codes M79.10, M79.18
Brain fog	Diagnosis codes R41.0 (Disorientation, unspecified), R41.82 (Altered mental status, unspecified), R41.840 (Attention and concentration deficit), R41.89 (Other symptoms and signs involving cognitive functions and awareness), and R41.9 (Unspecified symptoms and signs involving cognitive functions and awareness) represent diagnoses that approximate the symptoms that patients with brain fog describe
Long-haul case definition	A diagnosis event of any of the above diagnoses between 4 weeks and 6 months after COVID-19 diagnosis for a patient who did not have that same diagnosis in an encounter between 01/20/2019 and the patient's COVID-positive date.
Patient population	Patients who had a face-to-face encounter between January 20, 2019, and the date they tested positive for COVID-19.