

- Virus

## Long Covid: An undiscussed sequela of Covid-19

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The Sun (Malaysia) · 4 Jun 2021 · 8 · By Moy Foong Ming Dr Moy Foong Ming is a professor at Centre of Clinical Epidemiology & Evidence Based Practice, Department of Social & Preventive Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

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**MOST** patients with Covid-19 experience mild symptoms or moderate illness.

Approximately 10-15% of patients progress to severe disease, and about 5% become critically ill.

Typically, patients recover from Covid-19 after two to six weeks.

While most patients with Covid-19 recover and return to normal health, some patients can have symptoms that last for weeks or even months after recovery.

These patients are not infectious to others during this time. This persistent state of ill health is known as Long Covid or post-Covid condition.

Long Covid is a range of symptoms that continue for weeks or months beyond the initial illness.

It can happen to any Covid19 patients, even patients who are not hospitalised and who have mild illness can experience persistent or late symptoms.

Some patients develop medical complications that may have lasting health effects.

Patients with Long Covid report experiencing different combinations of symptoms such as tiredness or fatigue, difficulty thinking or concentrating, headache, loss of smell or taste, dizziness on standing, palpitations or increased heartbeat, chest pain, difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, cough, joint or muscle pain, depression or anxiety, fever, symptoms that get worse after physical or mental activities etc.

These symptoms are caused by our response to the virus continuing beyond the initial illness.

Preliminary results from a national survey in the UK estimates that around one in 10 Covid-19 patients exhibit symptoms for a period of 12 weeks or longer.

Another study found that 30% of Covid-19 patients surveyed still had persistent symptoms after nine months. However, there is no such information available in Malaysia.

As our accumulated Covid19 cases is almost 600,000 now (595,374 cases on June 3, 2021), there should be some observation on patients who recovered from Covid to see if they have Long Covid.

Information on the prevalence, seek treatment or not, ability to resume physical function as before illness, health-related quality of life and proportion of those returning to work should be monitored.

Covid-19 patients who recovered and were discharged, regardless of them having mild or moderate symptoms, should be well informed about Long Covid.

They should be advised to seek treatment if they experience any severe symptoms as mentioned above.

With nearly 600,000 accumulated cases of Covid-19 in the country, even a small percentage of patients experiencing long-term debility could have significant and lasting health and economic consequences for the country.

The best method to prevent Long Covid is to prevent Covid-19. Practise all SOP, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces, get vaccinated when available.