Post-COVID symptoms and managing return-to-work

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Purpose Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) infection is associated with risk of persistent neurocognitive and neuropsychiatric complications (Colizzi M, 2024), termed "post-COVID". Cognitive impairment, as one of the symptoms of post-COVID, exhibits persistent and delayed onset characteristics, and it has shown similar features as other neurodegenerative diseases (Wang W, 2024). These persistent symptoms negatively impact health, quality of life, and work productivity (Ida FS, 2024). Further higher age is found to be associated with more substantial reductions in current work ability (Kerksieck, P, 2023). The study aimed to investigate the frequency of post-COVID-19 syndrome and associated factors on patients work ability and issues of returning to work. **Method** A retrospective analysis of patients presenting to a post-COVID outpatient clinic at Marburg University Hospital, Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Germany was conducted. Patients received basic socio-demographics, structured examination, psychometric diagnostic and neuropsychological examination. **Results and Discussion** In total, 113 patients participated in this study with an average age of 45.2 ±12.07 years. 65.49 % of patients were women. In 98.23% of the cases the initial infection was mild. The most frequent symptoms of admission included fatigue (84.07%), cognitive decline (99.12%), affective symptoms (56.63 %) and insomnia (41.59%). The symptom duration could be determined for 324 days from infection to admission to the post-covid outpatient clinic. Moreover, 54,59% of patients showed a reduced work productivity or were unable to return to work. These results show long-term effects of post-COVID-19 syndrome on cognitive and emotional functioning and sleep quality and underline the substantial impact on work ability. A previous study showed that patients with cognitive impairment benefit from technology specifically designed for supporting the task-management needs in the workplace (Marashi S 2020). Based on these findings, the value of supporting technologies in the workplace might also be transferred to patients with post-COVID syndrome.

References

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