

ELEMENTS: IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

Long-term damage by COVID-19 to end organs: don't forget the kidney

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In the context of long-COVID syndrome—the significant emphasis has been placed on the disabling brain- and lung-related end-organ injury.¹ We are very much aware that pre-existing renal disease in the context of acute COVID-19 infection is associated with particularly poor prognosis. But what about persistent renal injury long after the acute infections has subsided?

We, therefore, welcome the commentary piece by Dr Svetitsky and colleagues from Imperial College who highlight the long-term effects of COVID-19 on the kidney. Studies of long-COVID at 6 months post-acute infection reveal that up to 35% of individuals have a significantly reduced glomerular filtration rate (GFR).^{2,3} While this is often associated with the severity of the initial systemic illness, it is worthwhile noting that 13% of patients who did not have acute kidney injury during hospitalization showed a reduction in GFR during follow-up.³ The authors highlight the potential reasons for this and the importance of longer-term longitudinal studies to more precisely define early markers of longer-term renal injury.

Mental health of the older population during COVID-19

The QJM has been at the forefront of highlighting the current and future mental health effects of COVID-19 and enforced social isolation on healthcare workers, immigrants and the population in general.^{4–8} We continue highlighting this ongoing public health problem with a paper by Dr Bailey and colleagues at Trinity College Dublin on the mental health effects on the elderly. They found that 39% of their population suffered significant mental health issues with 50% reporting a significant decline in their physical and mental well-being. This article analysed their population in 2020 and with further surges in case

numbers and the extension of social isolation well into 2021—these figures will not have improved. The authors highlight the importance of clear strategies to maintain social engagement, manage loneliness and continue physical activity with associated access timely supportive medical care and rehabilitation services.

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