

# Recovery from Covid-19 may be prolonged

Dear Editor,

Kumar *et al.* draw their inference from nationwide lockdown up to phase 2 as a response towards novel Coronavirus -2 epidemic in India in Sep 2020 issue of the Journal. They analyse various data of first 68 days of the pandemic related to number of (investigation confirmed) cases, doubling time, number of deaths & notifications issued by Government of India.<sup>[1]</sup> In Figure 5 the investigators depict that how much fraction of cases recovered at various points of time.

However now we're realising that a certain percentage of cases may have recovered virologically from the disease but they continue to remain symptomatic. Researchers from Israel emphasise that there is a need to conduct a study of long-term consequences of Covid-19.<sup>[2]</sup> Now we know that among various clinical features of the disease, some are caused by direct virological cell invasion & others are due to immunological responses mounted by patient's body. Hence when these patients are discharged, how many after-effects are there individually due to which mechanism/s, need to be assessed. Also when patients develop this highly infectious disease, they are separated from their family -members & cared by strangers (healthcare-workers in PPEs) in unfamiliar setting of isolation- rooms. Hence mental healthcare issues are arising for this group. Therefore whether it leads to psychiatric features requiring expert support, will be known only in times to come.

Recently British Medical Association sent a warning to its members that impact of long-term symptoms of Covid-19 may be profound on patients.<sup>[3]</sup> Researchers in Italy – which became an epicenter of the disease in early stages of the pandemic- followed up their patients who were hospitalized after discharge & directed them to fill a questionnaire defining their symptoms. What they discovered is that more than half (55%) of the patients continued to experience 3 or more symptoms, most frequently being fatigue, dyspnea, joint pain & chest pain.<sup>[4]</sup> Although Italian cohort was not matched for a control group & patients discharged after a bout of pneumonia are known to have some symptoms

afterwards, there is a need to conduct a bigger study to know its any disproportionate increase in Covid-19 cases.

Also various clinicians are reporting cases of cardiac inflammation in covid-19 patients.<sup>[5]</sup> Patients with pre-existing illness (comorbidities) are likely to get destabilized soon. Follow-up cases of Hypertension, coronary heart disease & congestive heart failure are likely to deteriorate fast once they develop novel coronavirus infection as compared to general population. When cardiac cells die, enzymes contained in those cells are released –known as cardiac markers of injury & include high sensitivity Cardiac Troponin T. When patients are discharged on becoming asymptomatic, they are shown to be having inflammation in myocardium. What is its prognosis, we'll know only in future. Even asymptomatic patients are having this malady on cardiac MRI. As a few cases of sudden deaths are known during this pandemic in young adults, what is the contribution of cardiac inflammation there; is a dilemma, we are forced to face & seek answers.

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### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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## Letter to Editor

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We accessed all the webpages at the time of submission of this Letter to the Editor.

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