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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Remote assessment for identifying COVID-19 post-acute care needs

Manoj Sivan[1]

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The 'Gemelli Against COVID-19 post-acute care' study aims to capture the longer-term needs of those recovering from the illness [1]. The authors propose a comprehensive multisystem examination involving a number of healthcare visits to capture symptoms and carry out relevant investigations. However, this might prove difficult in most countries due to the challenges of the volume of affected cases, lockdown measures and the need to minimise face-to-face contact and healthcare visits. There is a need for pragmatic remote screening tools that can help the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) monitor long-term symptoms and provide suitable interventions in a timely manner. Telemedicine is a well-established method for assessing, monitoring and providing treatments in a wide range of health conditions. Applying telemedicine to the current challenge of aftercare in the COVID-19 pandemic is an obvious choice for healthcare services across the globe.

The COVID-19 Yorkshire Rehabilitation Screen (C19-YRS) is one such tool that was developed especially to screen individuals recovering from COVID-19 using a telephone consultation [2]. It has 19 questions capturing the main biopsychosocial impact (spanning across all WHO ICF domains), with simple yes/no response options and a 0–10 numerical rating scale grading the impact of each symptom on their functioning. The respondent is also asked to rate each symptom pre-illness (pre-COVID-19) in case of pre-existing medical problems. The scores for each symptom and progression (worsening, same or improving) will determine the need for treatments and further investigations [3]. C19-YRS is administered by a specialist clinician who is qualified and suitably trained to provide advice and treatment to the patient during the telephone call. There are also other domain-specific remote assessment tools such as R-MAPP to assess nutritional status and functional ability [4].

✉ Manoj Sivan
M.Sivan@leeds.ac.uk

[1] Academic Department of Rehabilitation Medicine, D Floor, Martin Wing, Leeds General Infirmary, Leeds LS1 3EX, UK

The 'Gemelli Against COVID-19 post-acute care' study (using face-to-face assessment) and the Leeds COVID-19 follow-up study (using telephone assessment) are one of the first reports in the literature on longer terms symptoms [5, 6]. It is interesting to see the results of both studies are comparable. There is a need for continuing to follow-up these survivors beyond the post-acute stage (up to 12 months at least) to capture the true multidimensional and biopsychosocial aspects of the post-COVID syndrome. Timely and appropriate management of this syndrome can help restore function and quality of life for millions of survivors worldwide.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest None to declare.

Ethical statement The study complied with the existing ethical standards.

Statement of human and animal rights Considering the nature of the article no human or animal rights were infringed upon.

Informed consent Considering the nature of the article no informed consent was necessary.

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