Study says 'long Covid' symptoms still linger, even after two years

A recent study highlights the burden of Covid-19 that continues to affect millions of people, showing that patients who were hospitalized with the disease are especially vulnerable to a long list of health problems and death two years after the initial infection, and that those with mild or moderate infections have an elevated risk of two dozen medical conditions, Amy Goldstein reports for The Washington Post.

The study, published in the journal Nature Medicine, looked at the risk of death, hospitalizations and 80 conditions that are typical of "long Covid" in people who had had severe Covid-19 as well as those with milder infections. The study followed the patients for two years after infection. The analysis was based on electronic medical records from the Department of Veterans Affairs database of nearly 139,000 veterans diagnosed with Covid from March 2020 through the end of that year. They were compared to nearly 6 million veterans not known to be infected with Covid during that time.

The Kaiser Family Foundation says the working definition of long Covid is "signs, symptoms and conditions that continue or develop after initial Covid-19 or SARS-CoV2 infection."

"A lot of people think, 'I got Covid, I got over it and I'm fine,' and it's a nothingburger for them. But that's not everything," the study's senior author, Ziyad Al-Aly, a clinical epidemiologist at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, told Goldstein.

After a couple of years, "maybe you've forgotten about the SARS-CoV-2 infection … but Covid did not forget about you. It's still wreaking havoc in your body," said Al-Aly, chief of research for the VA in St. Louis.

The study is believed to be the first to document such data beyond the one-year mark, Goldstein reports. "According to Al-Aly, just two other known studies have used two-year time horizons, but they focused on a narrow group of symptoms, such as effects on the nervous system," she writes.

Estimates of how many people develop long Covid vary, Goldstein points to an analysis of nearly 5 million U.S. patients who had it between early 2020 and January 2022, based on a collaboration between the Post and electronic health records company Epic, that found about 7 percent of those patients sought care for long-Covid symptoms within six months of their acute illness.

"At the time, about 200 million people in the United States were known to have had Covid, according to x estimates, so that percentage translated into about 15 million with symptoms typical of long Covid," she writes.

"For the relatively small share of Covid survivors who had been hospitalized, they had a heightened risk two years later of death, subsequent hospitalization and two-thirds of the medical conditions included in the analysis. Among those conditions: cardiovascular issues, blood clotting trouble, diabetes, gastrointestinal problems and kidney disorders," Goldstein writes.

Al-Aly told her that the survivors and the uninfected started out in similar health, which suggest the virus is what produced the heightened risk of lingering medical problems.

Goldstein adds that the bulk of the survivors in the study with milder Covid had fewer long-term risks, but they still had some.

"By six months after having tested positive, they were no more likely to die than people uninfected by Covid," she writes. "And their elevated risk had virtually disappeared by then for two-thirds of the conditions measured in the study, though they still displayed greater odds after two years of medical problems involving some organ systems, including cardiovascular and gastrointestinal trouble and blood clotting, along with diabetes, fatigue and lung issues."

Francesca Beaudoin, an emergency-room physician and clinical epidemiologist who directs Brown University's long-Covid initiative, told the Post that the findings "capture what we are hearing at the narrative level from patients — that . . . the systems [affected after recovery from Covid's acute phase] are varied, that it results in loss of quality of life, loss of work and school." Beaudoin added that patients send her updates, reporting they still cannot walk one block without becoming worn out.

Goldstein writes that the report recognizes that the analysis is not entirely representative of who is most likely to develop long Covid, noting that nine out of 10 of patients in the study are men, while women account for more than half of long-Covid patients in the general population.

The VA funded the study. Al-Aly told Goldstein that he and co-authors are working on a three-year analysis and plan to assess the same patients five years and a decade after they first developed Covid.

Kentucky: Cases of whooping cough (pertussis) increase

By Sarah Ladd
Kentucky Lantern

Kentucky is seeing an uptick in cases of pertussis, more commonly called whooping cough, a highly contagious respiratory illness.

The state Cabinet for Health and Family Services said in a Friday newsletter: "Recent cases have occurred primarily in Central Kentucky but cases are being seen throughout the commonwealth."

Whooping cough can be a life-threatening illness and is most dangerous for babies, according to the the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It can, however, affect people of any age.

Whooping cough is highly contagious, according to the CDC. Vaccines are available to children as young as 2 months old and can help prevent it.

Early symptom onset to recovery can take around 12 weeks, according to the state Department for Public Health, which says symptoms of whooping cough include:

- Runny or stuffy nose
- Uncontrollable coughing
- Vomiting from coughing
- Fever below 100.4 Fahrenheit
- Apnea (life-threatening pauses in breathing) and cyanosis (turning blue or purple) in infants and young children

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Children: Basics of ADHD

August and September mark the beginning of a new school year for millions of children. A new school year contains a host of challenges for every student, but some, particularly those with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, may face steeper challenges.

ADHD is common in both the United States and Canada. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that ADHD affects between 4 and 12 percent of school-aged children, while the Center for ADHD Awareness, Canada indicates between 5 and 7 percent of Canadian youngsters have the condition. Such figures are disconcerting, particularly when considering the adverse effects of ADHD on academic performance. In fact, a 2019 study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry found that ADHD was associated with substantially lower performance in school independent of socioeconomic background factors.

The stakes are high regarding ADHD and academics, so as a new school year begins, students and their families can familiarize themselves with the condition to ensure it does not interfere with their efforts to do their best in the classroom.

What is ADHD?

The AAP describes ADHD as "a chronic condition of the brain that makes it difficult for children to control their behavior." Such characterization explains why the link between ADHD and poor academic performance is so strong. The AAP notes that children with ADHD often have trouble getting along with other children and, if they have issues with attention, they can have difficulty learning.

Behavioral symptoms of ADHD

The AAP notes that ADHD includes three distinct groups of symptoms: inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. Children with inattention may daydream and have a hard time paying attention, often do not seem to listen, may be easily distracted from work or play, and may not follow through on instructions or finish tasks. Children with hyperactivity may be in constant motion, exhibit difficulty staying seated, frequently squirm or fidget, talk too much, and be incapable of playing quietly. Children with impulsivity may frequently act and speak without thinking, run into a street without first looking for oncoming traffic, be incapable of waiting, and frequently interrupt others.

It's important for parents to recognize that children with ADHD will not necessarily have all the symptoms. Symptoms are classified by the type of ADHD a child has, and a physician will indicate that upon diagnosis. ADHD cases are usually determined to be inattentive only, hyperactive/impulsive or combined ADHD, which includes symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.

When should I alert a physician?

The AAP notes that all children exhibit the symptoms noted above from time to time. However, a physician should be alerted when children exhibit those symptoms on a regular basis for more than six months.

More information can be found at healthychildren.org.

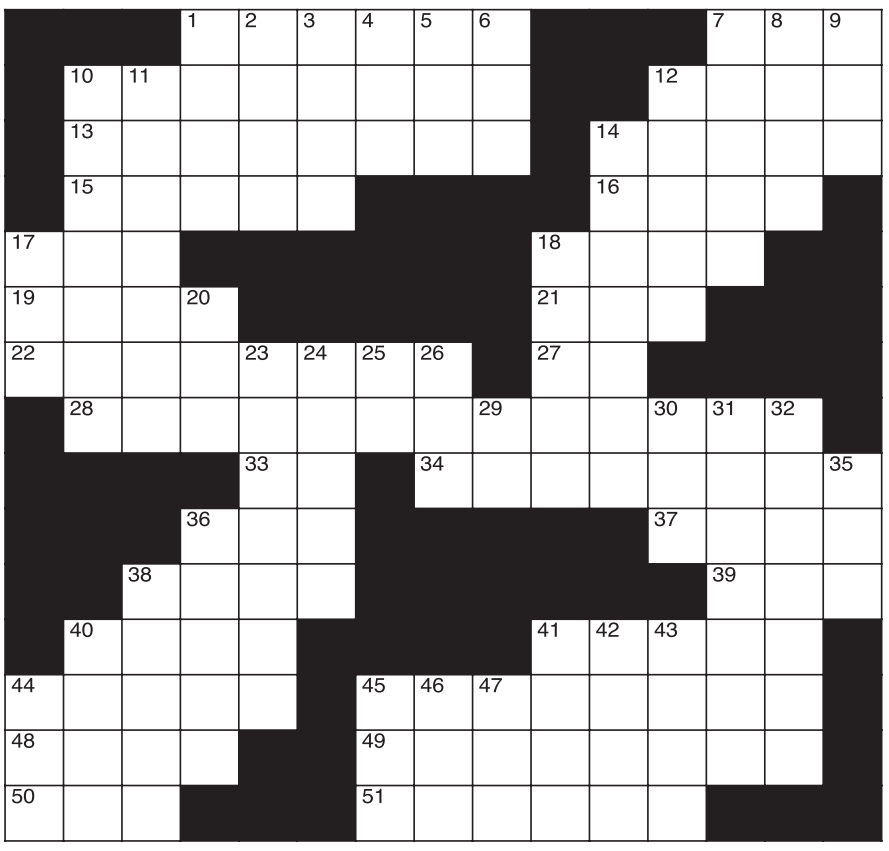
Reed

From page 1B

This slow down proves wrong those who claimed HB 8 would lead to a disaster.

Today we have proof that the formula is working as it was designed to work. All factors, including this year's revenue report, show that Kentucky is still on track to eliminate the individual income tax and point toward promising conditions for a third cut to the tax in 2026.

As always, I can be reached anytime through the toll-free message line in Frankfort at 1-800-372-7181. You can also contact me via e-mail at Brandon.Reed@lrc.ky.gov. You can also keep track of committee meetings and potential legislation through the Kentucky legislature's home page at legislature.ky.gov.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Type of crayon
7. Fashion accessory
10. Most cerebral
12. Incline from vertical
13. Dependent on
14. Broken in
15. Strongly desires
16. Mounted soldier
17. Ad __: when necessary
18. Cattle
19. Ottoman military commanders
21. __ student, learns healing
22. Composed in poetic meter
27. Promotional material
28. Where people live
33. Sodium
34. Embarrassing
36. Medical man
37. Mother of Hermes
38. One who saves the day
39. Tooth caregiver
40. Not clothed
41. Slope covered with loose stones
44. Used to cook
45. Praises enthusiastically
48. Rooney is a famous one
49. Beekeeper
50. Pigpen
51. Potato chip brand

CLUES DOWN

1. Living quarters
2. Horizontal passage
3. Attacks
4. Vietnamese offensive
5. Midway between east and southeast
6. Confined (abbr.)
7. Book of Esther antagonist
8. Port in Yemen
9. CNN's founder
10. Type of bulb
11. Prepare
12. Promoted
14. Dinner jackets
17. Partner to cheese
18. Nebraska city
20. Human gene
23. Pays no attention to
24. Lowland South American plain
25. Blood group
26. Mauna __, Hawaiian volcano
29. Atomic #37
30. Unit of electrical resistance
31. Jeweled crowns
32. Nastiest
35. Traditional cars need it
36. Bowler hat
38. Robust
40. Not straight
41. Stony waste matter
42. Have an interest in
43. Jacob __, journalist
44. Maintains possession of
45. Swiss river
46. Average cost of market goods
47. Spanish soldier: El __

Answers on 3B