

Public Health

Long COVID in Children A Call for Paying More Attention

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Long COVID in pediatric patients has lately attracted the interest of healthcare professionals and researchers around. Children, although typically less susceptible to severe sickness caused by the virus, can still have enduring symptoms such as weariness, impaired concentration, and respiratory problems long after their first infection. Acknowledging and dealing with these persistent consequences is essential to guaranteeing the general health and welfare of pediatric patients. Healthcare practitioners need to dedicate more focus to the phenomena of Long COVID in children, undertaking additional research to comprehend its frequency, risk factors, and best therapies. By enhancing knowledge and executing customized interventions for those impacted, we can more effectively facilitate the process of recovery and enhance results for this susceptible group.

Keywords: Long COVID; Pediatric Population; Symptoms; Health Well-being; Attention Care

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ALTHOUGH THE INITIAL emphasis of the pandemic was mainly on acute cases of COVID-19, studies have revealed a worrisome proportion of children who continue to have symptoms long after their initial infection (Fink et al., 2024; Ha et al., 2023; Sugiyama et al., 2024). These enduring consequences can greatly influence a child's physical, cognitive, and emotional health, possibly influencing their academic achievement and general quality of life. The identification and management of long COVID in children will enhance our comprehension of the fundamental processes responsible for these extended symptoms and facilitate the development of focused therapies to promote their recuperation (Al-Aly & Topol, 2024;

Cezar et al., 2024; Sansone et al., 2023). Furthermore, the surveillance and control of long COVID in children can effectively mitigate possible enduring repercussions and guarantee the best possible results for this susceptible group (Calcaterra et al., 2024; Minotti et al., 2024). Close collaboration between healthcare providers, families, educators, and other important stakeholders is crucial for the successful implementation of comprehensive care plans that effectively meet the multifaceted needs of children who are presenting with long COVID.

Initially, it is crucial to acknowledge that children may also experience long COVID, with symptoms such as fatigue, shortness of breath, brain fog, and joint discomfort persisting for

months following their initial infection (Rao et al., 2024; Toepfner et al., 2024). These symptoms can significantly influence a child's quality of life, potentially limiting their participation in sports, school, and other activities. Thus, it is vital that healthcare providers and policymakers prioritize the identification and management of long COVID in children to guarantee that they receive the necessary care and support (Zheng et al., 2023).

On the other hand, there is still a scarcity of research on the long-term effects of COVID-19 in children, as the majority of the extant literature concentrates on adults (Al-Aly & Topol, 2024). Consequently, there is a requirement for additional research that specifically investigates the prevalence, risk factors, and outcomes of long COVID in pediatric populations. We can develop targeted interventions to address the unique challenges encountered by children with long COVID and gain a better understanding of the challenges they face by allocating resources to this area of research (Fink et al., 2024).

Additionally, healthcare systems must be prepared to provide multidisciplinary care teams that can address the physical, cognitive, and emotional symptoms of children with long COVID. This may encompass services that are customized to the unique requirements of children with long COVID, including cognitive behavioral therapy, physical therapy, and mental health support (Harris, 2024; Minotti et al., 2024). By investing in these resources, we can enhance the outcomes for children with long COVID and facilitate their recovery more efficiently and effectively.

Schools and educators are essential in providing assistance to children with long COVID, as these individuals may encounter difficulty in meeting their academic obligations as a result of persistent symptoms (Gonzalez & Suzuki, 2024; Wild et al., 2024). Modified schedules, additional time for assignments, and remote learning options are among the accommodations and supports that schools should provide to children with prolonged COVID-19 (Long-Term Health Effects of COVID-19, 2024). We can guarantee that children with long COVID receive the academic support necessary to succeed by establishing a supportive educational environment.

Moreover, parents and caregivers of children with long

COVID require assistance and resources to assist them in overcoming the obstacles of caring for a child with persistent symptoms (Gonzalez & Suzuki, 2024; Sansone et al., 2023). This may encompass opportunities for peer support and networking with other families who are confronting comparable challenges, guidance on managing symptoms at home, and access to information about the condition (Knafl et al., 1996; Tamplain et al., 2024). We can improve the capacity of parents and caregivers to advocate for their children's needs and establish a robust support system for the entire family by empowering them.

Public health messaging and education campaigns should increase awareness of the long-term effects of COVID-19 on children, underscoring the significance of early detection and intervention to mitigate its effects on their health and well-being (Gupta & Jawanda, 2020; Hassan et al., 2023; Irwin et al., 2021; Yoshikawa et al., 2020). By raising awareness among healthcare providers, educators, parents, and the general public, we can guarantee that children with long COVID-19 receive timely and appropriate care, resulting in enhanced quality of life and better outcomes physically and academically.

Additionally, the field of long COVID in children and the development of evidence-based solutions to address this complex condition are contingent upon the collaborations between healthcare providers, researchers, policymakers, and advocacy organizations (Morello et al., 2023; Rao et al., 2024; Rodríguez - Morales et al., 2023). By collaborating, we can take advantage of our combined resources and expertise to enhance the identification, management, and outcomes of children with long COVID, thereby promoting improved health and well-being for this vulnerable population.

In sum, the prolonged COVID-19 infection of children is a significant and evolving issue that necessitates the allocation of additional resources and attention from all sectors of society. By prioritizing research, healthcare, education, and support services for children with long COVID, we can improve their outcomes, enhance their quality of life, and guarantee that they receive the care and attention they deserve. It is essential that we prioritize the long COVID in children in order to confront this expanding public health issue and ensure the welfare of the next generation. ■

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