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Newsletter

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This Month's Question:

Is COVID winding down or is this just the beginning?

PMLCtex Answer:

COVID has become part of the American psyche. Health care providers are under significant exposure and therefore have increased risk of infection as a work-related injury. As the number of acute cases subsides, will we be able close the book on COVID or will another chapter emerge?

The medical community has long been aware of "post-illness syndromes". Examples are the development of shingles after having had chicken pox or the development of heart or kidney disease after a bout of streptococcal pharyngitis (strep throat). The existence of post-infection sequelae is not a new phenomenon.

More recently, post-sepsis syndrome and post-ICU syndrome have appeared in the medical literature. It is believed that the former affects up to 50% of those who survive having had sepsis. No one can say if what we've seen with acute COVID will fade or if it is really the tip of the iceberg. Even if the percentage of patients affected by prolonged disease is small, the actual number of affected healthcare workers would be significant. The

ability to return to a full work schedule (or work at all) may be at substantial risk for some of those affected. The medical community appears ill-prepared to care for those cases. As an emerging entity, diagnostic and treatment modalities are in their rudimentary stages.

Persistent post-COVID syndrome (PPCS) is also referred to as “long COVID”. The underlying mechanism is under debate. Regardless of the actual mechanism, among those who recover from acute COVID infection, there is an emerging sub-population of individuals who report persistent or returning symptoms. The medical community is often slow to recognize developing medical entities when symptoms are indolent and especially if there is a time delay prior to developing clinical symptoms.

Specific symptoms will likely vary among those affected. However, the persistence or re-activation of acute COVID-19 symptoms will likely head the list. Persistent or recurrent fever, cough and shortness of breath have already been reported. Fatigue, decreased smell (anosmia) and diminished taste in some combinations have been observed as well. Neurologic symptoms such as dizziness, balance issues and even seizure activity have been reported. As well, recent studies show “brain fog” or more accurately persistent cognitive loss symptoms as one of the most often reported problems associated with PPCS.

Persistent or recurring symptoms serve as strong evidence of persistent and recurrent inflammation. Affected individuals will not only be dealing with diminished function but also the need to perform duties under duress. Both scenarios lead to a diminished quality and enjoyment of life. The underlying inflammation will lead to fibrosis (scarring) of affected tissues. Symptoms resulting from such fibrosis will likely be permanent and possibly progressive. This phenomenon is already suspected in cases of heart failure post-COVID.

Medical literature is only beginning to recognize PPCS. Proper diagnosis and management will be developing as recognition and experience progress. This total scenario of acute COVID plus the specter of PPCS will be a difficult minefield to negotiate without the help of a knowledgeable medical consultant.

Let Us Know How We Can Help You

- Medical Summary Reports
- Help with strategies to promote medical theories
- Interpretation of meaning, or lack thereof, of medical reports & records
- Attendance at IME's
- Reviews of IME Reports
- Independent Record Reviews
- Assessment of case validity regarding medical issues
- Referral to appropriate expert medical witnesses
- Medical Research
- Facilitation of communication with clients, families, professionals and service & governmental agencies
- Case Coordination
- Facilitation of communication with treating doctors
- Table-side deposition assistance or deposition question preparation

As you know, **we have purposefully kept our fees exceptionally low; a fraction of typical expert witness fees** allowing you the opportunity to have us review your cases early in your representation while controlling your expenses.

CONTACT US for information or fee schedule.

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P.S. ---Please pass this Newsletter along to your colleagues.