

The Chance of Being Diagnosed with a Mental Health Condition after Having COVID

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This Research at a Glance

Main Question

Are people more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health condition after having COVID?

Answer

Yes. People who had COVID were 25% more likely to be diagnosed with any mental health condition sooner after having COVID (21 days to 4 months) compared to people who had other respiratory tract infections (RTIs) like the flu.

This research confirmed findings from past studies that found people have a higher chance of being diagnosed with a mental health condition after having COVID. But, this research found that the chance is lower than past studies. The researchers concluded that health care systems should do mental health screenings soon after a person has COVID to better diagnose and treat mental health conditions.



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Why was this research needed?

Researchers want to learn more about the chance of getting a mental health condition after having COVID. Mental health conditions include anxiety disorders and mood disorders, such as depression. Knowing the chance of getting a mental health condition could help doctors better diagnose and treat people after having COVID.

Two past studies found that people had a higher chance of being diagnosed with a mental health condition 3 to 6 months after having COVID compared to after having other respiratory tract infections (RTIs), like the flu. An RTI is an infection in the parts of the body involved in breathing, such as the nose, throat, airways or lungs.

In this study, researchers wanted to confirm findings from past research.

The goal of this research was to answer this question:

Are people more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health condition after having COVID?



What happened during this research?

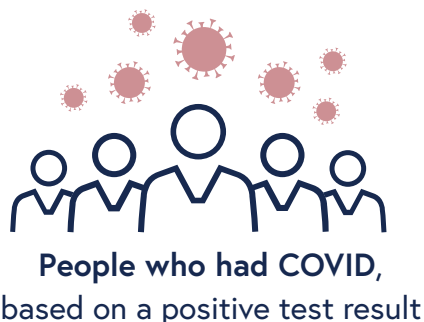
Researchers used electronic health record (EHR) data from health systems across the United States in the National COVID Cohort Collaborative (N3C). EHRs are digital versions of patients' medical records.

Researchers compared people who had COVID to people who had other RTIs to learn how many were diagnosed with a mental health condition in these 2 timeframes:

- Sooner after having COVID or other RTIs, which was 21 days to 4 months afterwards
- Later after having COVID or other RTIs, which was more than 4 months to 1 year afterwards

Whose data was included in this research?

Researchers reviewed EHRs from about 100,000 people between January 2020 to October 2021. They looked at 2 groups of people:



None of the people had a diagnosed mental health condition in their EHR before they had COVID or other RTIs.



What were the main results?

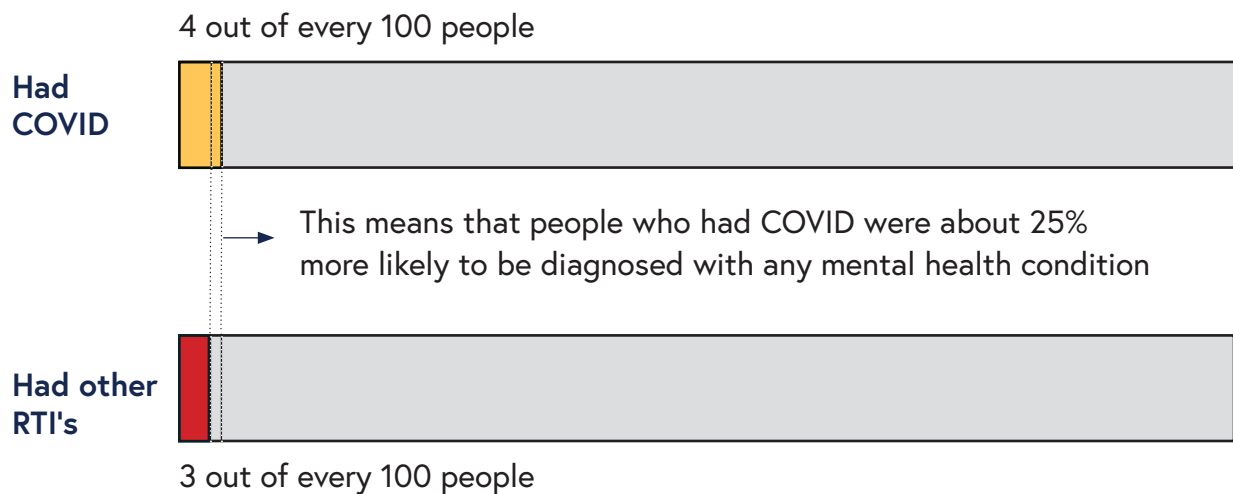
Are people more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health condition after having COVID?

Yes, but only during a certain timeframe, which was 21 days to 4 months after having COVID.

Compared to people who had other RTIs, people who had COVID:

- Were more likely to be diagnosed with any mental health condition sooner after their infection (21 days to 4 months)
- Had the same chance of being diagnosed with any mental health condition later after their infection (more than 4 months to 1 year)

The number of people diagnosed with any mental health condition sooner after COVID or an RTI



How has this research helped?

This research found that people who had COVID were about 25% more likely to be diagnosed with any mental health condition sooner after having COVID compared to people who have other RTIs. This confirms findings from 2 past studies. But, this research found that the chance is lower than past studies, which found that people were about twice more likely (100% higher) to be diagnosed with any mental health condition.

The researchers concluded that health care systems should do mental health screenings soon after a person has COVID to better diagnose and treat mental health conditions.



Where can I Learn More About this Research?

Read the full paper published in *World Psychiatry* online on May 7, 2022 at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9077621/>

Full paper title:

Risk of new-onset psychiatric sequelae of COVID-19 in the early and late post-acute phase

Authors: Ben Coleman, Elena Casiraghi, Hannah Blau, Lauren Chan, Melissa A. Haendel, Bryan Laraway, Tiffany J. Callahan, Rachel R. Deer, Kenneth J. Wilkins, Justin Reese, Peter N. Robinson

About RECOVER

RECOVER is a research project that aims to learn about the long-term health effects of COVID. We're hopeful that this project will help us better prevent and treat Long COVID in the future. RECOVER is paid for by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Learn more at: RECOVERcovid.org