Mental health issues after COVID-19 are common: Here's a checklist to follow.

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Introduction

Up to one year following COVID-19 infection, our risk of mental health issues such anxiety, sadness, substance abuse, and sleep disorders is reduced? A new study demonstrates why addressing mental health issues among COVID-19 survivors should be a top focus. COVID-19 infections have caused more than 14.8 million additional cases of mental illness worldwide, with 2.8 million in the United States [1].

The mental health study

The researchers compared the COVID-19 dataset's mental health outcomes to two other groups of people who were not infected with the virus: a control group of over 5.6 million patients who were not infected with COVID-19 during the same time period, and a control group of over 5.8 million patients from March 2018 to January 2019, well before the pandemic began [2].

The bulk of those who took part in the study were older white men. The survey, however, comprised more than 1.3 million females, more than 2.1 million Black participants, and a vast number of people of varied ages due to its large size. COVID-19 patients were further split among those who were admitted to the hospital during the acute phase of infection and those who were not. Age, race, sex, lifestyle, and medical history were also taken into account as potential influencing factors. The researchers then tracked all three groups for a year to determine the risks of predetermined mental health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and stress disorders, as well as substance abuse disorders, neurocognitive decline, and sleep disorders [3].

At one year, patients with COVID-19 had a 60% higher chance of any mental health diagnosis or prescription as compared to the non-infected control group. COVID-19 was linked to an extra 24 per 1,000 adults with sleep problems, 15 per 1,000 with depressive disorders, 11 per 1,000 with neurocognitive decline, and 4 per 1,000 with any substance use disorders when the researchers looked at mental health diseases independently. When the COVID-19 group was compared to the historical control group, similar results were obtained.

How to take care of mental health?

The first step is to place mental wellness at the top of one's priority list. The unpredictability of human life has become more apparent throughout the epidemic, and coping with the unstable and transient nature of the times we live in may be distressing for everyone [4].

As a result, the best thing to do is to concentrate on the present. Being more present can be achieved through meditation and aware living. However, being present in the moment isn't a cure-all.

So, if you're having trouble calming down because of a prior trauma or anxiety about forthcoming life events, remember that it's perfectly normal to feel that way, and if you're feeling overwhelmed, seek professional treatment.

Allow yourself to experience emotions. The last two years have thrown a lot at us, and it's vital to remember that it's quite normal to feel fatigued, burned out, or simply overburdened. Feelings will not go away if they are suppressed.

If you feel surrounded by an incomprehensible or even explicable grief, talk to someone or, better yet, get professional help. Keep in touch with friends and family by picking up the phone frequently. They are the ones who are the most familiar with you and may occasionally assist you in identifying feelings that you were previously unaware of [5].

Eat full, wholesome meals to keep your body energised. Also, make sure you receive enough rest. If you're having trouble sleeping, chat to a sleep expert, try chamomile tea, read a book, or do whatever else you believe will help you get your sleep cycle back on track. Last but not least, avoid stressors - whether they are people, work, or locations, put on your self-preservation mode and avoid them at all costs.

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