

Chronic Pain Patients During/after COVID – Effects

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Abstract

Objective

The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic has diverse manifestations including neurological. Chronic pain can lead to a number of detrimental health issues such as mental health problems, opioid use disorder, and potentially suicide. Chronic pain is a prevalent condition around the world and it is not yet clear how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the chronic pain population.

Methods

A literature review was performed using PubMed and Google Scholar to search the following key words: “Chronic Pain” “COVID-19” “chronic pain patients and COVID-19” “Effects of COVID-19 on Chronic Pain.” Limited results were produced, references were supplemented with articles found in bibliographies and other authoritative websites.

Results

With chronic pain affecting 15-30% of people across the globe, SARS-CoV-2 may have the potential to contribute to a rise in this statistic as patients report new onset pain symptoms after being infected with the virus. One study followed COVID-19 patients after being released from their hospital stay and demonstrated that 65.2% of patients reported new-onset pain compared to the control group, (11%, P=0.0001). These patients included those living with chronic pain and those living without pain. When exclusively considering patients without previous chronic pain, results were similar with 70% having new-onset pain and only 20% in control groups. Neuropathic syndromes have also been reported in COVID-19. Pain maybe part of the “long-haulers” syndrome reported with COVID-19.

Conclusion

The issue of COVID-19 and chronic pain is multifaceted, and it is important to understand the relationship between this viral infection and its potential to further exacerbate or even induce chronic pain to help reduce the prevalence of this serious complication. More research is needed to better understand how viral infections may impact chronic pain patients, as well as possibly create new cases of chronic pain.

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