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Long COVID Is Linked to Lower Life Satisfaction, Happiness, and Hopefulness

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LONG COVID GOES BEYOND PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

In a national survey of nearly 14,000 U.S. adults ages 18-64, those with long COVID symptoms had lower life satisfaction and were less likely to be happy or hopeful about the future. Depression or anxiety and brain fog were the symptoms most strongly tied to lower wellbeing, while most physical symptoms, such as fatigue and shortness of breath, were not linked to wellbeing on their own.

39%

of U.S. adults ages 18-64 reported having had at least one long COVID symptom

40%

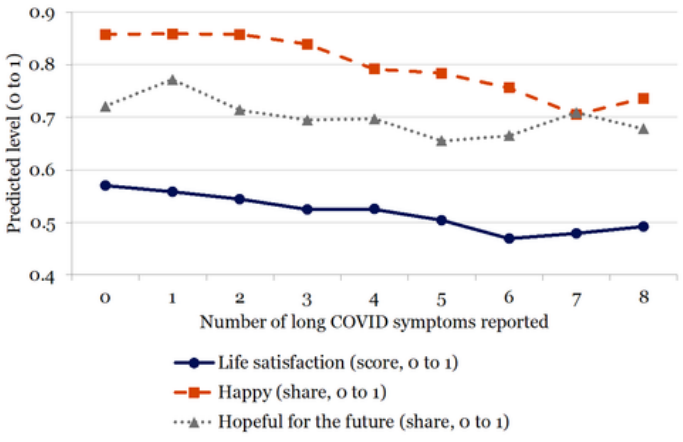
lower odds of being happy for adults with long COVID symptoms, compared with those without symptoms

30%

lower odds of feeling hopeful about the future for adults with long COVID brain fog, and for those with depression or anxiety

Wellbeing Declined as the Number of Long COVID Symptoms Increased among U.S. Adults Ages 18-64

- Wellbeing changed little with one or two symptoms, but fell as symptoms added up.
- About 86% of adults with no symptoms were predicted to be happy, compared with about 70% of those with seven.
- Hopefulness followed a similar but less consistent pattern.
- Adults with several symptoms appear most at risk of lower wellbeing.



WHAT IT MEANS FOR POLICY

- Include screening and treatment for depression, anxiety, and brain fog in post-COVID care, alongside care for physical symptoms.

WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

- Recognize that long COVID can affect mood and thinking, not just physical health, and support continued tracking of long COVID and its effects on wellbeing.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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