

Public Awareness of Covid-19 Neurological Sequelae

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Received: February 07, 2021; **Published:** February 15, 2021

We borrow an expression from the legal world: justice must be done and must be seen to be done. We dwell on the fact and the perception of the fact. And we apply it to Covid-19, its regards popular perception, neurological sequelae and the subsequent reaction of the masses in co-operating with health authorities by avoiding the condition.

It is by now an established fact that Covid-19 infection may lead to a broad spectrum of neurological complications, the ends of the spectrum being most likely undefined as yet. For the infection may involve any part of the CNS be it vasculature, nerves, brain and spinal cord substance, leading to strokes, convulsions and altered cerebration among other effects. Just as incompletely understood is the mechanism by which such damage is inflicted. The range is as yet undefinedly wide and includes immunological damage, hypoxia and hyper-coagulation states leading to clinical pictures such as Guillain-Barre or that of a cerebrovascular accident. All combined with and exacerbated by the now well-known muscle atrophy and weakness. These neurological complications often occur in people who are not critically ill and do not require ventilation. Furthermore, although it is true that neurological complications from Covid-19 infections are commoner in the older patients, it has also been observed that even young adults are at risk of such complications. At the moment, research is being conducted to confirm or otherwise acute psychiatric and neuropsychiatric complications occurring in young patients.

It would be interesting to evaluate data dealing with the perception of the effects of Covid-19 among various age groups. Many clinicians get the impression that many of the older patients in general seem to consider themselves at high risk both of getting the disease and also of dying from it, particularly through lung complications. On the other hand, the younger generations seem to consider themselves not at particular risk of the disease or of dying from it and if they were to contract it, they seem to assume that it would likely be asymptomatic or mild. The clinical impression is that neither age group seem to realise the possibility of developing neurological sequelae and both age groups seem to associate neurological sequelae with an infection which is severe and more likely to effect to affect the elderly. The truth is otherwise.

In our opinion it is crucial to disseminate the truthful facts of Covid-19 among the masses. It is a fact that, in spite of knowing all the facts, some individuals will still risk exposure. After all, the route and transmission of HIV/AIDS are well-known, but some individuals still practice unsafe sex even with strangers. However, the Covid-19 situation demands the co-operation of the masses and most people do listen to reason. It is at this juncture that demolishing the myth of wrong perception comes in and this is by no means easy. Yet, the ever increasingly confirmed potential neurological sequelae arising even from a mild Covid-19 infection must be driven home along with the risk of this not being limited to the elderly. Bringing such facts about Covid-19 to the fore of the masses' attention is now doubly difficult and complicated owing to the presence of Covid-19 fatigue. Such fatigue is unavoidable after the good part of a year's hammering through all available media. This is further complicated by the presence of a degree of Covid-fatigue which is unavoidable after year or so of

hammering by the media. Such fatigue has also contributed to the diminished lack of fear of the disease as noticed in some countries with the second wave of the pandemic.

In view of all these facts, it is our belief that the discussed aspect of the disease be brought to the attention of the various populations by imagery rather than words. Imagery is currently much more likely to rivet conscious thought and penetrate sub-conscious thinking than any number of words. In fact, if imagery is used on TV, we would prefer it is unaccompanied by no words at all. Silence may shout louder than any exhortation while seeing a short TV advert of a young man ravaged by a stroke or a young woman who cannot walk unaided. Stop talking about it. Show it.

Volume 13 Issue 3 March 2021

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