

# BMJ Rapid Response:

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## Long Covid: We are disappointed that the learning points don't include 'doctors should assess and investigate patients properly'

Dear Editor

This is a poignant piece of patient perspective and illustrates well the experience of many patients that were very sick at the peak of the first wave but denied proper medical assessment and told to 'stay at home'. Of course it is important to 'show you care' and empathise with the patient. However as part of an on-line group of over 500 doctors (and ever growing in number) affected by Long Covid we are disappointed that the learning points don't include 'doctors should assess and investigate patients properly'. Pre-covid, symptoms such as low oxygen levels, tachycardia, shortness of breath would warrant examination and investigation, especially when persistent and in previously fit and healthy patients.

It saddens us to hear such low expectations from general practice and secondary care. This is a new disease and we are surprised about the lack of professional curiosity to explain new and sometimes seemingly odd symptoms. There are now numerous BMJ publications supporting the need for further assessment such as 'Patients' experiences of "Long Covid" are missing from the NHS narrative' (1) to 'From doctors as patients: a manifesto for tackling persisting symptoms of covid-19' (2) to the Practice Pointer article 'Management of post-acute covid-19 in primary care'. (3) Pathological consequences such as myocarditis (4) or thromboembolic episode (5) may explain symptoms and these have been noted to occur months after onset within long covid support groups. The medical profession needs to evolve rapid transformative pathways to deal with the long term sequelae of covid that include full investigation of patients. This is becoming urgent as new covid cases are increasing again and we are already starting to see a new wave of 'Long Covid' patients.

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2. Alwan, N. A. et al. From doctors as patients: A manifesto for tackling persisting symptoms of covid-19. The BMJ vol. 370 33 (2020).
3. Greenhalgh, T., Knight, M., A'Court, C., Buxton, M. & Husain, L. Management of post-acute covid-19 in primary care. BMJ 370, (2020).
4. Puntmann, V. O. et al. Outcomes of Cardiovascular Magnetic Resonance Imaging in Patients Recently Recovered from Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). JAMA Cardiol. (2020) doi:10.1001/jamacardio.2020.3557.

5. Sartoretti, E., Sartoretti, T., Imoberdorf, R., Dracklé, J. & Sartoretti-Schefer, S. Long-segment arterial cerebral vessel thrombosis after mild covid-19. *BMJ Case Reports* vol. 13 236571 (2020).

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