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Consequences of COVID-19 in Adult Patients at least 10 Months after Infection in the West Bank

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Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a global health disaster with significant rates of morbidity and mortality. Over 772 million people were infected and nearly seven million have lost their lives. The virus plagues the respiratory system mainly causing fever, dyspnea, and dry cough as initial symptoms. The long-term effects of COVID-19 are still unknown, particularly in the Middle East, so this study was conducted to determine the long-term consequences of COVID-19 on Palestinian people living in the West Bank.

Methods: This cross-sectional study included 407 Palestinian adult patients with a confirmed COVID-19 infection. Data was collected using a questionnaire through a phone interview. The study was approved by the Palestinian Ministry of Health and Al-Quds University Ethics Committee. SPSS version 25.0 was used for data analysis. The chi-square test was used to identify the relationship between the persistence of infection symptoms and two variables: the need for hospitalization and recovery time.

Results: The mean age was 40.0 years, with a female percentage of 54.1%. More than half of the patients had smell loss, lethargy, fatigue, headache, and joint pain during the infection. 92.6% of patients recovered within 4 months; 4.7% recovered within more than



4 months; and 2.7% did not recover. The persistence of chest pain (χ^2 , 16.225; $P < 0.001$), shortness of breath (χ^2 , 13.257; $P = 0.001$), and lethargy (χ^2 , 8.194; $P = 0.017$) were found to be significantly associated with hospitalization need. The persistence of all the mentioned symptoms was found to be significantly associated with the duration of recovery.

Conclusions: Our study provides important insights into the long-term symptoms experienced by individuals recovering from COVID-19 in the West Bank. Our results have implications for healthcare professionals, policymakers, and individuals affected by COVID-19, emphasizing the need for comprehensive care plans, resource allocation, and ongoing support for COVID-19 patients in the West Bank. Future research should continue to investigate the long-term effects of COVID-19, address the limitations of previous studies, and explore potential mechanisms and interventions to improve the management and outcomes for COVID-19 survivors.

Keywords: COVID-19, Long Covid syndrome, Post-acute Covid, Pandemic, COVID-19 Symptoms, Palestine.