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Prevalence and risk factors for post-COVID condition 12 months after a test: evidence from a Portuguese region

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Background & objective

- Recent studies refer to a prevalence of at least one symptom of Post COVID-19 Condition (PCC) between 43% and 70% for 2020-2022.
- Differences in estimates arise from the region analysed, follow-up time, hospitalised vs non-hospitalised and the inclusion of confirmed and/or probable infections of SARS-CoV-2.
- The development is associated with multiple factors, from individual characteristics to the broader impacts of the pandemic.



To estimate the prevalence of symptoms 12 months after SARS-CoV-2 testing, comparing individuals with positive and negative test results, and identify factors associated with PCC symptoms in individuals with a positive test in Lisbon and Tagus Valley

Methods

Data

- National System of Epidemiological Surveillance (SINAVE);
- Individuals who had a SARS-CoV-2 test – August 2022;
- Telephone interviews 12 months after testing;
- Sociodemographic details, health behaviours, pre-existing conditions, and COVID-19 symptoms.

Analysis

- Post COVID-19 Condition (PCC) was defined as the presence of ≥ 1 symptom 12 months after testing;
- Prevalence was estimated for participants with positive and negative test results, with the respective 95% confidence interval (95% CI);
- Robust Poisson regression to estimate prevalence ratios (PR), with 95% CI, to analyse risk factors in individuals with positive test results.

Results



6,642 individuals



699 individuals:



473 positive test



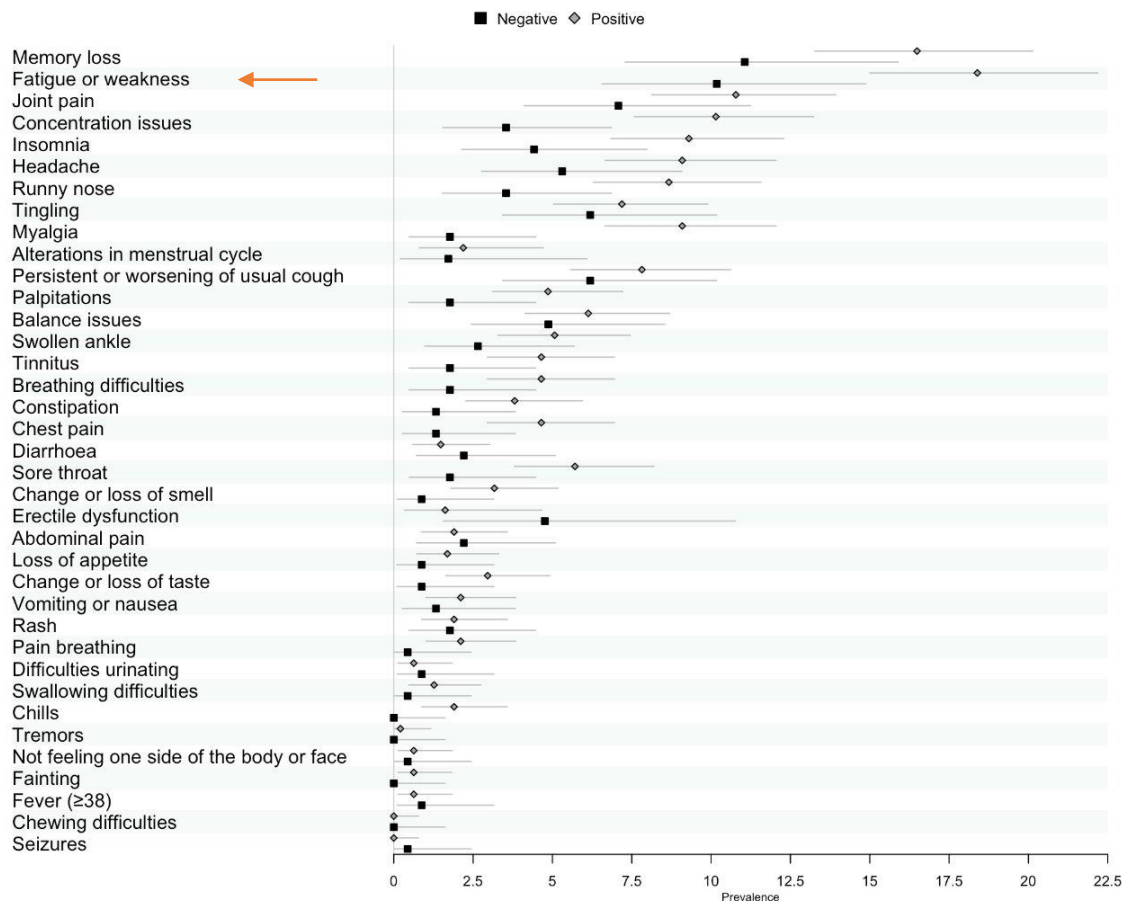
226 negative test



41.65 (95%CI: 37.17; 46.24)





35.84 (95%CI: 29.59; 42.47)





Prevalence of symptoms at 12 months after a SARS-CoV-2 test.

Results

 Female (PR: 1.48, 95% CI: 1.13; 1.96)

 Age (PR: 1.01, 95%CI: 1.00; 1.02)

 Number of symptoms during COVID-19 infection (PR: 1.06,
95%CI: 1.03; 1.09)

 Smoking (PR: 1.39, 95%CI: 1.08; 1.79)

Conclusions

•Most of the symptoms analysed did not show a higher prevalence in those who tested positive, highlighting the need to distinguish these symptoms from other post-viral conditions and the broader effects of the pandemic

•Factors associated with higher risk of PCC symptoms, highlight the importance of targeted follow-up and preventive strategies for these individuals

As our sample is predominantly composed of cases that did not require hospital care during the acute infection, the results also emphasise that symptoms can emerge in non-severe cases, representing a wider range of people at risk