

Severe COVID-19 ups risk for PTSD in family members

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Family members of patients hospitalized in the intensive care unit (ICU)

with COVID-19-related acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) experience a doubled risk for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms at 90 days post-ICU discharge compared with family members of patients with non-COVID-19 ARDS, according to a study published online Feb. 18 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Elie Azoulay, M.D., Ph.D., from Paris University, and colleagues compared the association between patient hospitalization for COVID-19 ARDS versus ARDS from other causes and the risk for PTSD-related symptoms in family members. The analysis included 602 family members and 307 patients (181 patients with COVID-19).

The researchers found that family members of patients with COVID-19 ARDS had a significantly higher prevalence of symptoms of PTSD (35 versus 19%), symptoms of anxiety (41 versus 34%), and symptoms of depression (31 versus 18%) compared with family members of non-COVID-19 ARDS. COVID-19 ARDS was significantly associated with an increased risk for PTSD-related symptoms in family members when adjusting for age, sex, and level of social support (odds ratio, 2.05). Among bereaved family members of patients who died from COVID-19, PTSD prevalence was nearly twice as high as in family members of survivors (62 versus 35%).

"The disruption produced by the pandemic may have adversely affected the post-ICU outcomes," the authors write.

More information: Elie Azoulay et al, Association of COVID-19 Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome With Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Family Members After ICU Discharge, *JAMA* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2022.2017](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2022.2017)

Several authors disclosed financial ties to the pharmaceutical industry.

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