

Post-COVID-19 brain health impaired versus healthy controls

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Brain health after COVID-19 is impaired, but no more than that seen for

patients hospitalized for other medical conditions of similar severity, according to a study published online Dec. 28 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Costanza Peinkhofer, M.D., from Copenhagen University Hospital in Denmark, and colleagues examined whether long-term cognitive, psychiatric, or neurological complications differ for patients hospitalized for COVID-19 versus those hospitalized for other medical conditions of similar severity as well as healthy controls in a prospective cohort study. One hundred twenty patients with COVID-19 were included and matched with 125 patients hospitalized for pneumonia, [myocardial infarction](#), or non-COVID-19 intensive care-requiring illness between March 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, and 100 healthy age- and sex-matched individuals.

The researchers found that compared with healthy controls, patients with COVID-19 had worse [cognitive status](#) (estimated Screen for Cognitive Impairment in Psychiatry [SCIP] score, 59.0 versus 68.8; estimated mean Montreal Cognitive Assessment [MoCA] score, 26.5 versus 28.2); scores were similar when compared with hospitalized controls (mean SCIP score, 61.6; mean MoCA score, 27.2). During all other psychiatric and neurologic assessments, patients with COVID-19 performed worse than healthy controls. The [brain health](#) of patients with COVID-19 was not more impaired than among hospitalized control [patients](#), with the exception of executive dysfunction.

"Although studies with broader cognitive test batteries are needed to confirm these findings, brain health after COVID-19 seems overall comparable to that after other diseases of similar severity," the authors write.

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More information: Costanza Peinkhofer et al, Brain Health After COVID-19, Pneumonia, Myocardial Infarction, or Critical Illness, *JAMA Network Open* (2023). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.49659](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.49659)

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