

# Integrating psychological medicine in a post-Covid syndrome clinic: a quality improvement project

Dr Adam Al-Diwani and Dr Taylan Yukselen

Psychological medicine service, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

## Background and aims

- Given the complexity of post-COVID syndrome, national guidance recommends a comprehensive assessment of symptoms and functional status.
- The Oxford multidisciplinary Post-COVID syndrome clinic includes a liaison psychiatrist and clinical psychologist.

We aimed to evaluate:

- Overall psychiatric morbidity including mood, anxiety, and cognitive symptoms.
- The current role of psychological medicine in the clinic.

## Methods

- We conducted a trust-approved audit of patients assessed in the clinic between March-April 2021.
- Data was extracted from general practitioner referral forms and electronic healthcare records.

We recorded:

- age, gender, symptoms, symptom duration, PHQ-9 scores, psychiatric history, current psychotropic medication, and psychological medicine assessment and treatment plans.

## Results

### Baseline characteristics

- n=113 consecutive patients (8 clinics)
- Median age 45 years (range 16-78)
- 74 females and 39 males (ratio 1.9)
- Median symptom duration 350 days (range 52- 442)

### Biopsychosocial intervention

At referral:

- There was a psychiatric history in 61 (54%)
- Psychotropic medication prescribed in 36 (31%).

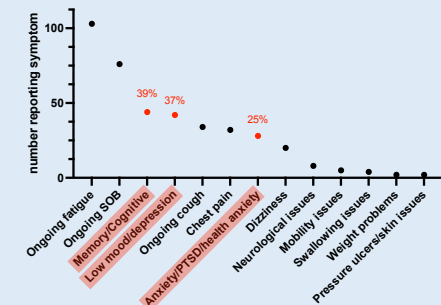
In the clinic:

- 55 (49%) were seen by either a psychiatrist (n=35) or a psychologist (n=20)
- A management plan was agreed in all:
  - Psychotherapy n=23 (42%)
  - Medication n=20 (36%)
  - Advice n=8 (15%)
  - Occupational health n=2 (4%)
  - CMHT n=2 (4%)

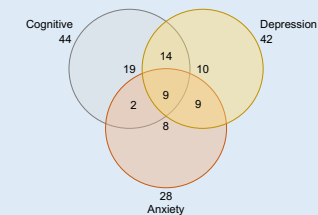
## Conclusions

- Psychiatric and cognitive difficulties are common in post-COVID syndrome
- More than half of this sample required direct input from mental health professionals.
- Psychological medicine involvement is gradually being integrated for holistic care.

### Symptom profile



- Cognitive, depressive, and anxiety-related symptoms were common.



- 71 patients (63%) had at least one of cognitive, mood, or anxiety, and at least two of these co-existed in 48%.