What is long COVID?

- Long COVID refers to persistent symptoms lasting > 3 months after acute COVID-19
- It affects 5-10% of COVID-19 survivors.
- With symptoms from multiple organ systems, it significantly impact patients daily functioning and activities
- Gender-specific disparities in women and men experiencing long COVID are not well-explored

Characteristics of the study population

	Women	Males	р
Gender, n (%)	567 (73%)	213 (27%)	
Age (y), mean (95% CI)	45.6 (44.6,47.6)	49.2 (47.3,51.0)	<0.001
Highest level of education, n (%)			<0.001
No education, primary/lower secondary school	24 (4%)	26 (13%)	
Upper secondary school	56 (10%)	24 (11%)	
Short-cycle higher education	168 (30%)	79 (38%)	
Medium-cycle higher education	247 (44%)	52 (25%)	
Long-cycle higher education	65 (12%)	27 (13%)	
Current work status, n (%)			0.308
Working same hours as before	196 (38.2%)	82 (44.3%)	
Sick leave	294 (57.3%)	94 (50.8%)	
Unemployed	23 (4.5%)	9 (4.7%)	
Sick leave, n (%)			0.135
Part-time sick leave due to long COVID	175 (60%)	62 (65%)	
Full-time sick leave due to long COVID	106 (36%)	26 (27%)	
On sick leave for other reasons	12 (4%)	7 (7%)	
Mental Fatigue Scale categories, n (%)			<0.001
No mental fatigue	27 (5%)	23 (11%)	
Slight mental fatigue	97 (17%)	47 (22%)	
Moderate mental fatigue	215 (38%)	91 (43%)	
Severe mental fatigue	226 (40%)	51 (25%)	

Long COVID and Disability: Does Gender Play a Role?

Preliminary results – please do not cite or reference

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What were the aims?

- To explore gender differences in:
- Sociodemographic characteristics
- Work status and sick leave
- Mental fatigue
- To examine and compare:
- Experienced problems with activities of daily living
- Prioritised ADL problems between women and men

What were the (preliminary) results?



Patients with ADL problems within subcategories

Distribution of prioritised activity problems

COPM subcategories	Women	Men
Personal care, n (%)		
Sleep	159 (29.2%)	52 (26.5%)
Work, n (%)		
Paid work	362 (66.4%)	134 (68.4%)
Fulfilling the role of a nurturer	135 (24.8%)	35 (17.9%)
Active recreation, n (%)		
Physical activities/exercise	254 (46.6%)	88 (44.9%)
Socialisation, n (%)		
Social interaction	328 (60.2%)	103 (52.65%)

The original subcategories are presented with bold.

*p <0.05

What methods were used?

- Study design: Analytic cross-sectional study
- Participants: 780 patients aged ≥18 years referred to the Long COVID Outpatient Clinic at Aarhus University Hospital
- Data Collection: Clinical evaluations and patient-reported outcomes
- Measures:
- Mental Fatigue Scale: Assesses the degree of mental fatigue
- Canadian Occupational Performance Measure: Examines the impact of long COVID on activities of daily living (ADL)
- Analysis:
- Quantitative gender comparisons were performed using chi-squared, Wilcoxon, or t-tests
- Qualitative deductive content analysis explored prioritized ADL problems

What did we lean?

- Women and men with long COVID reported similar challenges in daily activities.
- Severe mental fatigue and disrupted daily life were common across genders.
- Paid work, physical activity, social interaction, and caregiving roles were most frequently affected.
- These findings highlight the need to address key activity limitations in rehabilitation.

Who Made This Study Possible?

- Thank you to all participants and occupational therapists.
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Rehabilitation

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