

Bromley Community COVID-19 Monitoring Service – Patient Survey Results

Bromley Community COVID-19 Monitoring Service (BCCMS) was set up to triage and monitor patients at home with acute COVID-19 from the start of the pandemic. BCCMS receives referrals from GPs, 111 and local hospitals. To date the service has received 3,165 referrals.

BCMS recognised that patients were suffering from chronic symptoms long after they were suspected of contracting COVID-19. However the prevalence of symptoms (how widespread they are) and their duration was not clear. We therefore decided to survey all our patients (including children) to try to identify whether they continued to be troubled by symptoms and what these were.

The survey was initiated in mid-August 2020. We had 447 responses to 2600 questionnaires sent out (17% response rate). Some of the key findings from the survey are:

- The median age range was 45 to 54 years and 64% of respondents were women.
- 78% described themselves as 'white' or other 'white background'.
- The commonest week when patient felt that their symptoms began was 22nd March 2020.
- 99% of respondents felt their COVID-19 symptoms had begun more than four weeks previously and in 97% more than eight weeks previously.
- Only 91 (20%) had a throat swab taken for antigen testing and of these 51% were positive. Of the 429 respondents who answered this question, 67% did not see a doctor or nurse, 18% were seen at a hospital and 20% by a doctor or nurse in the community.
- 50 patients (of 432 responses) were admitted to hospital with the mean stay being 4 to 7 days although 4 patients were admitted for more than 30 days. Six respondents were admitted to ITU.

The commonest symptoms reported at the time of contracting COVID-19 were fatigue, fever, shortness of breath, cough and headache.

At the time of the survey the commonest residual symptoms that patient complained of were fatigue (44%), anxiety (30%), low mood or depression (30%), joint pain (29%) and shortness of breath (26%). These were also the commonest symptoms which patients felt that they needed assistance with. 65% (of 380 respondents answering this question) had sought advice about persistent COVID-19 symptoms with 60% consulting a medical practitioner and 33% calling 111.

A more detailed analysis of self-reported symptoms identified by the survey are detailed below:

Self-reported symptoms	"Before you developed COVID-19 did you suffer from any of the following symptoms?"	"When you contracted COVID-19 what symptoms did you develop?"	Do you have any of these symptoms now?	Do you feel that you need assistance with any of your symptoms now?
	Responded 'Frequently'	Yes/No	Responded "Severe or moderate"	Yes/No
Fatigue/tiredness	41%	87%	44%	34%
Anxiety	19%	38%	30%	28%

Low mood or depression	17%	32%	30%	21%
Joint pain	20%	46%	29%	16%
Shortness of breath	28%	72%	26%	30%
Headache	27%	67%	22%	12%
Muscle pain	22%	50%	20%	13%
Confusion or brain fog	10%	37%	20%	14%
Dry mouth or eyes	19%	27%	15%	7%
Loss of smell	19%	44%	13%	9%
Loss of taste	21%	48%	13%	9%
Chest pain	14%	42%	12%	11%
Cough	24%	68%	12%	8%
Nasal congestion	17%	28%	12%	7%
Dizziness	11%	40%	11%	8%
Coughing up mucus	14%	31%	10%	6%
Loss of appetite	24%	54%	7%	2%
Diarrhoea	9%	33%	7%	2%
Sore throat	16%	42%	6%	5%
Rashes	5%	15%	4%	3%
Fever	20%	73%	4%	3%
Red eyes	5%	14%	3%	2%

This pattern of symptoms is similar to that found by Carfi and colleagues (1) but in a population who have predominantly not been hospitalised or been seen by a doctor or nurse.

[The full survey response data can be found here.](#)

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1. Carfi A, Bernabei R, Landi F, for the Gemelli Against COVID-19 Post-Acute Care Study Group. Persistent Symptoms in Patients After Acute COVID-19. JAMA. 2020;324(6):603–605. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.12603