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A Social Media Survey on the Prevalence of Post-COVID Neurologic Complications Among Nigerians

Enquête sur les réseaux sociaux sur la prévalence des complications neurologiques post-COVID chez les Nigériens

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE: Cultural barriers and perceptual factors that are peculiar among Africans are known to limit the number of people seeking medical care for post-COVID conditions. The aim of this social media survey was to ascertain the burden of post-COVID neurologic complications in Nigeria in individuals with confirmed COVID-19.

METHODS: We performed a cross-sectional web-based survey of persons with PCR-confirmed or suspected SARS-CoV-2 infection in Nigeria with incident infection between March 2020 and April 2022. Our survey utilized Kobo Toolbox® and was disseminated via several online platforms (including WhatsApp®, Facebook®, and Twitter (X)®). Participant demographics, COVID-19 symptom profile, SARS-CoV-2 test results, and the occurrence of persistent neurological symptoms were documented.

RESULTS: We analyzed the data of 963 participants with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection. The mean age was 36.9 ± 9.9 years, and 555/963 (57.6%) were female. Only 174/963 individuals (18.1%) had SARS-CoV-2 PCR confirmation at any point during the pandemic, of which 133 (76.4%) had accompanying symptoms consistent with the case definition. A total of 47/174 (27.0%) of the PCR-positive participants reported post-acute COVID symptoms, and 46/174 (26.4%) had post-COVID neurologic complaints. The most commonly reported symptoms were fatigue (25; 14.4%), generalized body weakness (22; 12.6%), and difficulty remembering things (15; 8.6%). Slightly over half of those with post-COVID symptoms (25/47; 53.2%) sought care, with 21/25 (84%) presenting to a medical facility. Others presented either to a community pharmacy (1/25) or a patent medicine store (3/25) for care.

CONCLUSION: Despite low testing rates in Nigeria, the prevalence of post-COVID neurologic complications is approximately 1 in 4 individuals. Further studies on the prognosis and management of post-COVID neurologic sequelae in Nigeria are warranted.

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Keywords: COVID, SARS-CoV-2, Long COVID, Neurological sequelae, Nigeria.

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE ET OBJECTIF: Les barrières culturelles et les facteurs perceptuels propres aux Africains sont connus pour limiter le nombre de personnes recherchant des soins médicaux pour les affections post-COVID. L'objectif de cette enquête sur les réseaux sociaux était de déterminer la charge des complications neurologiques post-COVID au Nigeria chez les individus avec un COVID-19 confirmé.

MÉTHODES: Nous avons mené une enquête transversale en ligne auprès de personnes au Nigeria ayant une infection confirmée ou suspectée par PCR au SARS-CoV-2, survenue entre mars 2020 et avril 2022. Notre enquête a utilisé Kobo Toolbox® et a été diffusée sur plusieurs plateformes en ligne (notamment WhatsApp®, Facebook® et Twitter (X)®). Les données recueillies comprenaient les caractéristiques démographiques des participants, le profil des symptômes du COVID-19, les résultats des tests SARS-CoV-2 et la survenue de symptômes neurologiques persistants.

RÉSULTATS: Nous avons analysé les données de 963 participants ayant une infection confirmée ou suspectée par le COVID-19. L'âge moyen était de $36,9 \pm 9,9$ ans, et 555/963 (57,6 %) étaient des femmes. Seuls 174/963 individus (18,1 %) avaient une confirmation PCR du SARS-CoV-2 à un moment donné pendant la pandémie, parmi lesquels 133 (76,4 %) présentaient des symptômes compatibles avec la définition de cas. Un total de 47/174 (27,0 %) des participants positifs à la PCR ont signalé des symptômes post-COVID aigus, et 46/174 (26,4 %) ont rapporté des plaintes neurologiques post-COVID. Les symptômes les plus fréquemment signalés étaient la fatigue (25 ; 14,4 %), la faiblesse généralisée (22 ; 12,6 %) et les troubles de la mémoire (15 ; 8,6 %). Un peu plus de la moitié des personnes présentant des symptômes post-COVID (25/47 ; 53,2 %) ont recherché des soins, dont 21/25 (84 %) dans une structure médicale. Les autres ont consulté soit une pharmacie communautaire (1/25), soit un magasin de médicaments brevetés (3/25).

CONCLUSION: Malgré le faible taux de tests au Nigeria, la prévalence des complications neurologiques post-COVID est d'environ un individu sur quatre. D'autres études sur le pronostic et la prise en charge des séquelles neurologiques post-COVID au Nigeria sont nécessaires

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MOTS CLÉS: COVID, SARS-CoV-2, COVID long, Séquelles neurologiques, Nigeria

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