New Study Links Common Cold Virus to Risk of Developing Long COVID

PALM BEACH GARDENS, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, December 19, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Results from a recent study funded by several institutes from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) help shed light on a mystery that scientists have been exploring for the last two years. Although many infections with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, resolve within days or weeks, many people have symptoms that linger for weeks, months, or years due to what scientists call post-acute sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC) or "Long COVID."

An NIH-funded research team led by doctors at Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, MIT, and Harvard examined antibody responses in people with systemic autoimmune rheumatic diseases such as lupus who'd had COVID-19. The team measured antibody responses to SARS-CoV-2 and various other pathogens and vaccines and compared the responses of those who developed PASC with those who didn't. Results appeared in the September 6th issue of "Science Translational Medicine."

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The study found that previous infection with OC43, a coronavirus that causes the common cold, may increase the risk for Long COVID, particularly in patients with systemic autoimmune rheumatic diseases. Up to 45% of those with these rheumatic diseases who are infected with SARS-CoV-2 develop PASC.

The results may help explain why PASC develops in some cases. The findings also provide clues to help guide the development of novel treatments. They may also help identify people at high risk of developing PASC for enrollment in more targeted clinical trials.

Additional details about the research can be found on the NIH website: https://covid19.nih.gov/news-and-stories/common-cold-virus-may-increase-risk-long-covid. More investigation is necessary to determine whether these findings will also apply to people without rheumatic diseases.

“Ongoing research like this is essential to helping improve patient outcomes,” says Andrea Stephenson, CEO of the Health Council of Southeast Florida, whose goal is to provide residents with information to help enhance public health.

Visit stayhealthysunshine.org for a reliable source of updated information and facts, a vaccination-finder link, a list of Florida’s 11 Local Health Councils, and connections to assistance for COVID-related needs.

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Andrea Stephenson
Health Council of Southeast Florida
+1 561-844-4220
email us here
