

Cognitive Connections to COVID Recovery – interview transcripts

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Dr. Deepak Nair, OSF HealthCare Neurologist

“Brain fog is such a funny, silly term for something that I think can be profound and really disabling for people. Brain fog itself is a constellation of different symptoms. When we use the term brain fog that can be everything from just mild fatigue and just not feeling like you're running on all cylinders, to significant impairments of memory, concentration, focus, and maybe even edging into more what we call focal neurological deficits - so distinct parts of the brain not functioning the way they're supposed to.” (:33)

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“Even after the acute illness of an infection like this, your body is still going through a lot of phases of recovery, and some of those on a very, like molecular-chemical level. So some of that might take a prolonged amount of time to really reset back to baseline. And some of it is just waiting it out and being patient with ourselves.” (:20)

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“After an acute illness, some of those chemical changes that are happening in the brain can also cause psychosis. And this is not just in the setting of COVID, but really any severe illness. And so, our normal ways of knowing what's real, what's not, and being able to tell the difference between like, for example, dream state versus wakeful state, we kind of take a lot of this for granted. But there's a huge chunk of machinery inside your head that has to do all that work to be able to tell us what those things are. So those pathways and networks inside the brain can be impaired, both during the acute illness and afterwards.” (:40)