

# An Overview of Pharmacologic Treatments Under Investigation for Long COVID

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# Disclosure Statement

The speaker has no conflicts of interest or relationships with commercial entities that may be referenced in this presentation.

# Learning Objective

- Discuss pharmacologic treatment options under investigation in various clinical trials for Long COVID

# Definition of Long COVID

- AKA: 'post-COVID-19', 'long-haul covid', 'post-acute sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC)', 'ongoing COVID-19', 'chronic Covid syndrome'
- Prolonged/ residual COVID-19 symptoms lasting more than 4 weeks  
OR
- Relapsing/ new symptoms  $\geq$  30 days after acute infection

# Prevalence of Long COVID

- 45% of individuals with  $\geq 1$  unresolved symptom (at  $\sim 4$  months)
  - Hospitalized patients: 52.6%
  - Non-hospitalized patients: 34.5%
- Few people have full recovery
  - 85% of those w/ symptoms 2 months after acute infection, had symptoms 1 year after symptom onset

# Symptoms of Long COVID

- $\geq 60$  physical & psychological symptoms



- Fatigue, brain fog, postexertional malaise, dizziness

- Palpitations, chest pain



- Breathlessness, chronic cough

- Loss of or change in smell or taste



- Others: sleep disturbance, GI symptoms, changes in sexual desire, thirst, abnormal movements

# Pathogenesis of Long COVID

- Persisting viral reservoirs in tissues
- Immune dysregulation
- Autoimmunity
- Changes in gut microbiota
- Microvascular blood clotting with endothelial dysfunction
- Signaling dysfunction in brainstem/ vagal nerve

# Pharmacological Treatments Under Investigation in Clinical Trials



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# Core Symptoms



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# Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir

- **Trial registration#** NCT05668091
- **Study design:** randomized, double-blind
- **Inclusion:** highly symptomatic adults with long COVID
- **Intervention:** Nirmatrelvir 2x150 mg tab Q12h + Ritonavir 1X100 mg cap Q12h for 15 days
- **Primary outcome:**
  - Physical Health Summary Score (depression, physical function, pain interference, fatigue, sleep disturbance, satisfaction with participation in social roles)

# Nirmatrelvir/Ritonavir

(cont'd)

- **Trial registration#** NCT05576662
- **Study design:** randomized, double-Blind
- **Inclusion:**
  - $\geq 2$  long COVID symptoms (fatigue, brain fog, shortness of breath, GI or CV symptoms) persisting  $> 3$  months
- **Intervention:** Nirmatrelvir 2x150 mg tab Q12h + Ritonavir 1X100 mg cap Q12h for 15 days
- **Primary outcome:**
  - Core Symptoms Severity Scale Score (fatigue, brain fog, dyspnea, body aches, gastrointestinal symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms)

# Remdesivir

- **Trial registration#** NCT04978259
- **Study design:** randomized, open label
- **Inclusion:** alive patients who attended the SOLIDARITY Finland sub-study (w/ confirmed COVID infection + were admitted to hospital/ICU)
- **Intervention:** remdesivir IV during hospital stay up to 10 days
- **Primary outcome:** effect on long-COVID symptoms & quality of life at 1 and 2 years post-discharge

# Vitamin K2 & Vitamin D3

- **Trial registration#** NCT05356936
- **Study design:** randomized, open label
- **Inclusion:**
  - Diagnosed with COVID-19  $\geq$  3 months ago
  - With persistent, recurrent or even new long COVID symptoms
- **Intervention:** Vitamin K2 and Vitamin D3 by mouth daily
- **Primary outcome:** Effects on Inflammatory Biomarkers

# Metformin

- **Trial registration#** NCT04510194
- **Study design:** randomized, quadruple-blind
- **Inclusion:**
  - Adults, overweight/ obese
  - Documented SARS-CoV-2 positive within 3 days before enrolment
- **Intervention:**
  - Metformin administered within 3 days of symptom onset
  - Dose was titrated over 6 days: 500 mg on day 1, 500 mg BID on days 2–5, then 500 mg in AM and 1000 mg in PM up to day 14
- **Primary outcome:** metformin reduced incidence of long COVID by ~ 41%

# Neurocognitive Impairment



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# Baricitinib

- **Trial registration#** NCT05858515
- **Study design:** randomized, double blind
- **Inclusion:** documented COVID infection + neurocognitive symptoms for  $\geq 60$  days prior to screening
- **Intervention:** baricitinib 4 mg tab daily for 12 weeks
  - Dose adjusted for renal dysfunction (to 2 mg or 1 mg)
- **Primary outcome:** Global Neuropsychological Function



# Fluvoxamine

- **Trial registration#** NCT05874037
- **Study design:** randomized, double blind
- **Inclusion:** COVID infection  $\geq$  3 months ago + long COVID neurocognitive symptoms (e.g., brain fog)
- **Intervention:**
  - One dose of fluvoxamine 25mg, then one dose of 50mg, then one dose of 100mg
  - Assessment of subjective reaction to these test doses then randomize to individually tailored course of fluvoxamine for 16 weeks
- **Primary outcome:** improvement in long COVID symptoms (cognitive performance)

# Vortioxetine

- **Trial registration#** NCT05047952
- **Study design:** randomized, double-blind
- **Inclusion:** COVID infection > 3 months ago + symptoms persisting for  $\geq 2$  months
- **Intervention:**
  - Adults 18-64 yrs old: vortioxetine 10 mg daily for 2 weeks, then dosed up to 20 mg daily for weeks 2-8
  - Adults 65+ years: vortioxetine 5 mg daily for 2 weeks, then dosed up to 10 mg daily for weeks 2-8
- **Primary outcome:** Changes in cognitive function

# Lithium

- **Trial registration#** NCT05618587
- **Study design:** randomized, double-blind
- **Inclusion:** positive COVID test + symptoms of brain fog/fatigue
- **Intervention:** lithium 10mg PO daily for 3 weeks
- **Primary outcome:** effects on brain fog and fatigue

# Atorvastatin

- **Trial registration#** NCT04904536
- **Study design:** randomized, open label
- **Inclusion:** adults, COVID diagnosis + persisting neurological symptoms (impairment in memory, concentration, mood)
- **Intervention:** atorvastatin 40mg daily for 18 months
- **Primary outcome:** improvement in neurocognitive function

# Nicotinamide Riboside

- **Trial registration#** NCT04809974
- **Study design:** randomized, double-blind
- **Inclusion:** COVID infection  $\geq$  2 months ago + persisting brain fog (and other neurological/ physical symptoms)
- **Intervention:** Niagen (Nicotinamide Riboside, Vitamin B3) 2000mg capsules daily
- **Primary outcome:** improvement in cognitive function, mood, physical health

# Chronic Fatigue Syndrome



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# Naltrexone

- **Trial registration#** NCT05430152
- **Study design:** randomized, double-blind
- **Inclusion:** confirmed COVID infection + clinical diagnostic criteria for post-COVID fatigue syndrome
- **Intervention:** Low-Dose Naltrexone as a compounded capsule:
  - Week 1: 1 mg/day (1 mg cap)
  - Week 2: 2 mg/day
  - Week 3: 3 mg/day
  - Weeks 4-16: 4.5 mg/day
- **Primary outcome:** fatigue intensity, decline in levels of inflammatory markers

# Pregabalin

- **Trial registration#** NCT05967052
- **Study design:** randomized, double-blind
- **Inclusion:** documented COVID infection  $\geq$  6 months ago + diagnosis criteria of post-COVID chronic fatigue syndrome
- **Intervention:** pregabalin 75 to 300 mg daily + comprehensive rehabilitation for 6 months
- **Primary outcome:** change in fatigue intensity, walking distance



# Probiotics

- **Trial registration#** : NCT05975034
- **Study design:** randomized, double-blind
- **Inclusion:** persistent long COVID symptoms  $\geq$  3months after COVID infection
- **Intervention:** Probiotic taken daily for 12 weeks
  - Participants will use app to track symptoms for 3 weeks before study + last 3 weeks of treatment
- **Primary outcome:** fatigue severity

# Respiratory Symptoms



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# Montelukast

- **Trial registration#** NCT04695704
- **Study design:** randomized, double-blind
- **Inclusion:** documented COVID infection + persistent respiratory symptoms, mild-moderate dyspnea
- **Intervention:** montelukast 10 mg daily for 28 days
- **Primary outcome:** respiratory symptoms

# Colchicine

- **Trial registration#** NCT04818489
- **Study design:** randomized, open label
- **Inclusion:** confirmed COVID infection
- **Intervention:** Colchicine 2x0.5 mg BID (loading dose), then 1x0.5mg BID for 3 weeks
- **Primary outcome:** Pulmonary fibrosis

# Pirfenidone

- **Trial registration#** NCT04607928
- **Study design:** randomized, double blind
- **Inclusion:** recovered from severe COVID pneumonia + fibrotic lung sequelae
- **Intervention:** pirfenidone 2x267 mg cap Q8hr for 1 week, then if tolerated, increase to 3x267 mg cap Q8hr for 24 weeks
- **Primary outcome:** changes in pulmonary fibrosis



# Cardiovascular Symptoms



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# Metoprolol Succinate

- **Trial registration#** NCT05096884
- **Study design:** single group assignment, open label
- **Inclusion:** documented PCR positive COVID infection + tachycardia/dyspnea with minimal activity
- **Intervention:** metoprolol succinate 25 mg daily for 2 weeks, then if well tolerated every 2 weeks to a max dose of 400 mg daily for 8 weeks
- **Primary outcome:** Change in 6 minute walk test, cardiac function, quality of life

# Efgartigimod

- **Trial registration#** NCT05633407
- **Study design:** randomized, double blind
- **Inclusion:** new-onset postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome post-COVID
- **Intervention:** efgartigimod IV infusion 10mg/kg weekly for 24 weeks
- **Primary outcome:** reduction in severity of long COVID postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome



# Coenzyme Q compound

- **Trial registration#** NCT05373043
- **Study design:** non-randomized, double blind
- **Inclusion:** positive COVID test  $\geq$  3 months ago + long COVID symptoms
- **Intervention:** Exercise + Mito-Q (Mitoquinone) vs. Exercise + Placebo
- **Primary outcome:** improvement in vascular endothelial function

# Sensory Symptoms



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# Gabapentin

- **Trial registration#** NCT05184192
- **Study design:** randomized, double blind
- **Inclusion:** recovered from COVID infection + within 2 weeks, experienced post-COVID olfactory dysfunction for  $\geq 3$  months
- **Intervention:**
  - gabapentin, week 1: 300mg TID, week 2: 600mg TID, week 3: 900mg TID, week 4: 1200mg TID
  - then fixed dose (highest tolerable dose) for 8 weeks
  - then taper down for 2 weeks
- **Primary outcome:** improvement in olfactory function

# Pimozide

- **Trial registration#** NCT05507372
- **Study design:** randomized, double blind
- **Inclusion:** tinnitus after COVID infection, persisting for  $\geq 4$  weeks
- **Intervention:** pimozide 1mg
- **Primary outcome:** treatment of COVID induced tinnitus

# *Polling Question!*



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### 1. Which dietary supplement(s) is/are under investigation for management of long COVID symptoms?

0

0%



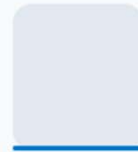
Coenzyme Q

0%



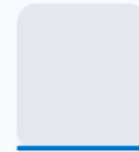
Vitamin B3

0%



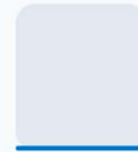
Vitamin D3

0%



Vitamin K2

0%



All of the above

# Key Takeaways

- ✓ Symptoms  $\geq$  30 days after acute infection
  - Fatigue, brain fog, palpitations, breathlessness
  - Involves one or multiple organs
- ✓ Pathogenesis/possible treatment options:
  - Persisting viral reservoirs in tissues => antivirals
  - Immune dysregulation => JAK inhibitors
  - Changes in gut microbiota => probiotics
  - Endothelial dysfunction =>  $\beta$ -blockers
  - Signaling dysfunction in brainstem/ vagal nerve => antidepressants



< 088 - Rohani - Long COVID

Moderate

Visual settings

Edit



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Questions?

0

Nobody has responded yet.  
Hang tight! Responses are coming in.



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