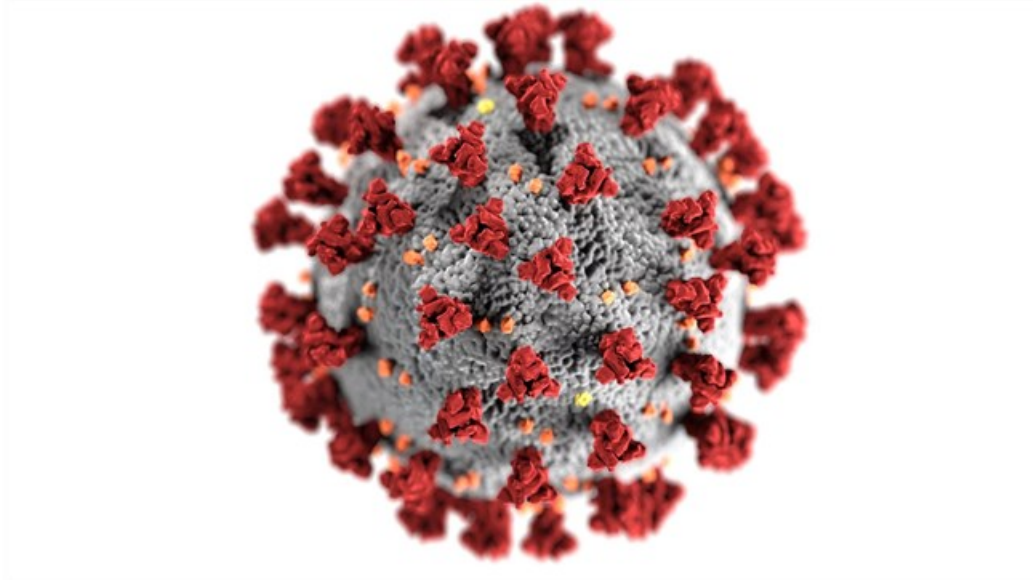


Latest stats spark urgent \$45m long Covid response

A new [study](#) has emerged revealing that approximately 962,000 children and 17.9 million adults have been impacted by long Covid in 2022 in the United States. This accounts for 1.3% of children and 6.9% of adults.



Source: [Pexels](#)

The report defines long Covid as symptoms that last at least three months after a positive test or a doctor's diagnosis of Covid-19, with children in particular exhibiting neurocognitive changes, low energy and constant fatigue.

The US Department of Health and Human Services estimates that up to 23 million people in the US have ever had long Covid.

To address the imperative for enhanced comprehension and treatment of long Covid, the US Health and Human Services Department recently granted an unprecedented \$45m in funding. This initiative aims to broaden access to care and promote optimal practices for managing long Covid. In a parallel effort, the Biden administration, in July, unveiled the establishment of the Office of Long Covid Research and Practice.

Meanwhile, Africa has reported around 13 million confirmed Covid-19 cases, with South Africa contributing nearly one-third of the total cases.

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) is among the few organisations on the continent providing

guidance on long Covid.

“We barely understand how Covid has affected South Africans. There hasn't been enough research to look after people with persistent symptoms,” said Waasila Jassat, a public health specialist at South Africa's NICD.



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16 Aug 2023



She followed up with approximately 5,000 people in South Africa experiencing long Covid for one year. The findings revealed that among individuals hospitalised with Covid, 47% still had ongoing symptoms after six months. For those who had Covid but weren't hospitalised, 19% still experienced persistent symptoms at the six-month mark.

Among the participants, 32% experienced fatigue, 16% had shortness of breath, one in 10 dealt with headaches, approximately 10% reported lack of concentration, and about 9% suffered from muscle pain.

She noted that quite a number of people said it impacted their occupation and they either had to change jobs or had to take a role with lesser responsibilities because of the symptoms.

She recommended training and retraining health workers to be able to recognise and care for people with long Covid.

Currently only two public hospitals, both in Cape Town, have long Covid clinics, and some private insurance companies provide coverage for long Covid, which includes access to a specialist, a few tests and investigations, and oxygen rehabilitation.

The Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention said the agency is working on a capacity building initiative to equip health workers to diagnose and manage long Covid.

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