

Recovering from COVID-19



Author:
Joyce Black

Joyce Black is Professor, College of Nursing, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, Nebraska, US

At the beginning of each year, most people have a wish list or a resolution, which often has something to do with health. My wish for 2021 is that the world recovers from COVID-19. So, you almost stopped reading this, right? I know I'm not the first person to have this wish, whether it be economic recovery or physical recovery; hopefully mine goes a bit further.

Multiple municipalities report new cases daily. Hospitals report daily admissions and daily deaths. While millions of people have contracted COVID-19, who is reporting on recovered patients? If the only numbers we hear are new cases or new deaths, how are the other millions of people faring?

Recovery from serious forms of COVID-19 includes:

- Breathlessness from severe lung and cardiac impairments arising from viral destruction
- Activity intolerance from polyneuropathy and myopathy from both the disease and the need for paralytics while ventilated
- Various complications from accelerated clotting from the virus, such as stroke, pulmonary embolism and deep venous thrombosis
- Catabolism from prolonged hypermetabolic state
- Large pressure ulcers on the buttocks from sitting up to breathe or on the anterior body surfaces from being placed into a prone position
- Lingering fatigue and headache from the inflammatory state

- Marked anxiety and survivor guilt that the person is still alive, while other family members and friends are not
- Grief over not being there with the dying friend/relative.

I recently addressed healthcare professionals on the topic of recovery from COVID-19 and I was startled to find there was so little on how to help these patients and their families recover. To provide some guidance to them, I spoke on cardiac and respiratory recovery, gaining strength and stamina, and appreciating the psychosocial aspects of this disease. How does this affect wound care professionals? In lots of ways; as you read the list of recovery issues from serious COVID-19, did you see the links to pressure ulcer development? (please say yes!). Each condition alone creates immobility and difficulty recovering or healing any wound. These patients will need time to heal and a close watch on the risk of infection.

I cannot prognosticate when we will be back to normal or what 'normal' will look like. But in the interim, we will be caring for many, many patients recovering from COVID-19. Be attentive to their unique risks during the long recovery. My wish list for all of us is that we take the opportunity to cultivate a better world from all we have learned from this deadly disease.

WINT

Writing for *Wounds International*

Wounds International welcomes a range of articles relating to the clinical, professional, and educational aspects of wound care. If you have written an article for publication or if you are interested in writing for us and would like to discuss an idea for an article, please email the editor, Adam Bushby, at: abushby@omniamed.com

