



High prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in COVID-19 ICU survivors



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Background

Since February 21st 2020, in Italy 318.065 people^[1] resulted infected by a novel coronavirus inducing a disease mainly characterized by severe acute respiratory syndrome (COVID-19). Besides physical sequelae, many elements of this pandemic suggest that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) may be frequent in ICU survivors^[2].

Aims and Objectives

To determine the prevalence of PTSD in a cluster of COVID-19 ICU survivors

Methods

We invited to attend a post-COVID outpatient control patients discharged home from ICU and from the hospital from March 1st to July 30th, 2020. Patients were asked to fill the Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R) to assess PTSD (Italian version by Giannantonio-Fig.1)^[3]. Median [IQR] were used for quantitative variables, number (percentages) for categorical. Comparisons among categorical variables were evaluated with Pearson chi-square/Fisher's exact test while Wilcoxon/Mann-Whitney U-test was used for quantitative variables. P-value ≤ 0.05 was considered significant (two-sided).

Results

We assessed 47 patients (males 70.2%; age 59.0 [50.0-66.0] year-old). Mean IES-R was 30.0 [19.0-41.0], with 19 patients (40.4%) presenting a score ≥ 33 corresponding to PTSD. Average score was significantly higher for intrusion 1.6 [1.0-2.5] vs. avoidance 1.3 [0.8-1.8] ($p=0.0488$) and both were higher when compared to hyperarousal 1.0 [0.3-1.5] ($p<0.0001$ and $p=0.0186$, respectively). Patients with and without PTSD showed no significant difference in terms of age, sex, ventilation need, length of stay in ICU. Patients with IES-R score >30 were addressed to outpatients' facilities of their area.

⊙ = per niente, ⊙ = un poco, ⊙ = moderatamente, ⊙ = abbastanza, ⊙ = estremamente

1. Ogni cosa che me lo ricordava mi faceva vivere emozioni relative ad esso	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
2. Ho avuto difficoltà a restare addormentato	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
3. Altre cose hanno continuato a farmici pensare	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
4. Mi sono sentito irritabile ed arrabbiato	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
5. Ho evitato di lasciarmi sconvolgere quando ci ho pensato o mi è stato ricordato	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
6. Ci ho pensato senza averne l'intenzione	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
7. Ho avuto la sensazione che non fosse successo o non fosse reale	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
8. Sono stato lontano da cose che potevano ricordarmelo	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
9. Le immagini di esso mi entravano nella mia mente all'improvviso	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
10. Sono stato nervoso e mi sono spaventato facilmente	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
11. Ho cercato di non pensarci	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
12. Sono stato consapevole di avere ancora molte emozioni su di esso, ma non sono riuscito a gestirle	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
13. Le mie emozioni riguardo ad esso sono state una specie di intontimento	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
14. Mi sono ritrovato a comportarmi o a provare emozioni come se fossi ritornato indietro a quel momento	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙
15. Ho avuto difficoltà ad addormentarmi	⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙ ⊙

Conclusions

PTSD prevalence is high among ICU survivors after COVID-19

Figure 1: The Italian version of the impact of event scale – revised

