Project: Post-COVID-19 Olfactory Dysfunction: Impact on Quality of Life, Patient Characteristics, and the effect of Olfactory Training

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Background

Olfactory dysfunction is one of the most common post-COVID-19 conditions. It is characterized by an impaired or distorted sense of smell, during sniffing and eating. Olfactory dysfunction is associated with reduced quality of life in other patient populations and can lead to social isolation and a high risk of depression.

Method

Population: Patients with impaired or distorted ability to smell (anosmia, hyposmia, parosmia, phantosmia) caused by COVID-19. The patients must have had the post-COVID-19 condition for more than 3 months, age > 18 years, and understand and speak Danish.

Setting: The project is a PhD project that takes place in the Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery & Audiology, Rigshospitalet, Denmark.

Studies: The project includes three sub-studies.

Study 1: Qualitative study (n=20)

Aim: To explore the patients' experiences of olfactory dysfunction after COVID-19 and how it affects their quality of life.

Method: A phenomenological-hermeneutic interview study inspired by Paul Ricoeur.

Study 2: Randomized placebo-controlled trial (n=65)

Aim: To investigate the effect of olfactory training with essential oils in patients with olfactory dysfunction after COVID-19 and whether olfactory training can improve the quality of life.

Method: The effect of a three-month intervention of olfactory training with essential oils or placebo oils is tested with the Sniffin' Sticks TDI test and PROMS.

Study 3: Cohort study

Aim: To identify patient characteristics, risk factors, and symptom clusters in patients with olfactory dysfunction after COVID-19.

Method: Patients are followed for 24 months where data from objective measurements, PROMS, biomarkers, and health information are entered into a REDCap database. Statistical data analysis will be conducted to investigate correlations, characteristics, and possible risk factors.

Status: The three sub-studies are ongoing.