**Scientists Just Beginning to Understand COVID-19 Health Problems**

**科学家们开始研究新冠肺炎引发的长期健康问题**

Scientists are only beginning to understand the health problems that are caused by the novel coronavirus. Some of these problems may have effects on people and healthcare systems for years to come, note doctors and infectious disease experts.

科学家们才刚刚开始了解新型冠状病毒引发的健康问题。医生和传染病专家们指出，其中一些健康问题可能会在未来数年内影响人类和医疗体系。

The virus that causes the disease COVID-19 attacks many organ systems, in some cases causing terrible damage.

引起新冠肺炎疾病的病毒会入侵许多人类器官系统，在某些案例中甚至引发了严重损害。

“We thought this was only a respiratory virus,” said Eric Topol, a doctor and expert on hearts. “(It) turns out, it (the virus) goes after the pancreas. It goes after the heart. It goes after the liver, the brain, the kidney, and other organs. We didn’t appreciate that in the beginning,” he said.

“我们曾认为这只是一种呼吸道病毒，”医生兼心脏专家埃里克·托波尔说，“后来才发现它(病毒)会影响胰腺、心脏、肝脏、大脑、肾脏等许多其他器官。一开始我们并没发现这一点。”

Topol is director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla, California.

托波尔是加州拉霍拉市斯克里普斯转化研究所的主任。

In addition to respiratory problems, patients with COVID-19 can experience blood clotting disorders and extreme inflammation. The virus can also cause neurological problems such as headaches, lightheadedness, seizures and even a loss of taste or smell.

除了呼吸系统问题，新冠肺炎患者还可能出现凝血障碍和极度炎症。这种病毒还可能导致神经系统问题，如头痛、头昏眼花、癫痫甚至味觉或嗅觉丧失。

And recovery can be slow, incomplete and costly.

康复过程却可能会很缓慢、无法完全康复且费用昂贵。

Dr. Sadiya Khan is a heart expert at Northwestern Medicine in the United States. He described the health problems caused by COVID-19 as somewhat unusual and different.

萨迪娅·汗博士是美国西北医学院的心脏专家。他把新冠肺炎引发的健康问题描述为有点不寻常且与众不同。

With influenza, people who have underlying heart conditions are also at higher risk of health problems, Khan said. What is surprising about this virus is the number of complications that take place outside the lungs.

汗说，有潜在心脏病的人患流感的风险也更高。令人惊讶的是，这种病毒的并发症发生在肺部以外的其他器官。

Khan believes there will be huge healthcare costs for people who have survived COVID-19.

汗认为，对于新冠肺炎幸存者来说将来会需要巨额的医疗费用。

Patients who were in a hospital intensive care unit or on a ventilator for weeks will need time to recover and regain their strength.

在医院重症监护室或呼吸机治疗数周的患者需要时间来康复和恢复体力。

“It can take up to seven days for every one day that you’re hospitalized to recover that type of strength,” Khan said. “It’s harder the older you are, and you may never get back to the same level of function.”

汗说：“你每住院一天就要花7天的时间去恢复原本的体力。年纪越大就越难，而且你可能永远也回不到原来的功能水平。”

While much of their attention has been on the patients who experience severe disease, doctors are looking to the needs of patients who were not sick enough to need hospitalization. Some of them are still suffering months after first becoming infected.

虽然医生大部分的注意力都集中在那些经历过病情严重的病人身上，但他们也在关注那些没有病到需要住院治疗的病人的需求。其中一些人在首次被感染的几个月后都仍在遭受病痛折磨。

Jay Butler is deputy director of infectious diseases at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. He told reporters in a telephone call last month that studies are just beginning to look at the long-term effects of infection.

杰伊·巴特勒是美国疾病控制和预防中心传染病科副主任。他在上个月的一次电话中告诉记者，有关感染新冠肺炎后对身体会产生何种长期影响的研究才刚刚开始。

“We hear anecdotal reports of people who have persistent fatigue, shortness of breath,” Butler said. “How long that will last is hard to say.”

巴特勒说：“我们听到一些轶事，说有人会一直感到疲劳，呼吸急促。而这种情况将持续多久还很难说。”

Helen Salisbury is a doctor with the University of Oxford. She wrote recently in The British Medical Journal that an estimated 1 in 10 people experience prolonged symptoms from the coronavirus.

海伦·索尔兹伯里是牛津大学的博士。她最近在《英国医学杂志》上写道，估计每10个人中就有1人经历了冠状病毒的长期症状。

Salisbury said many of her patients have normal chest X-rays and no sign of inflammation, but they are still not back to normal.

索尔兹伯里说，她的许多病人胸部X光检查正常，没有炎症迹象，但仍然没有恢复到正常状态。

“If you previously ran 5k three times a week and now feel breathless after a single flight of stairs, … then the fear that you may never regain your previous health is very real,” she wrote.

她写道：“如果你以前一周跑3次5公里，现在走一段楼梯就感觉喘不过气来……那么你会非常真切感受到对于自己可能永远无法恢复到以前的健康水平的那种恐惧感。”

I’m John Russell.

约翰·拉塞尔报道。

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