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Covid-19 Change in lifestyle conditions

Discovery Health has flagged a spike in lifestyle conditions, like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, in Covid-19 survivors, reported *Fin24* (January 2023).

Discovery Health surveyed more than 7 000 of its members who had fully recovered from Covid-19, asking them how they felt after fighting the virus. Of those 7 000 people, 6.5% said communicating had become harder. A third of respondents said they found concentrating immediately after their recovery difficult. But the most common complaints were headaches (31%), breathlessness (14%) and insomnia (14%).

Discovery Health's healthcare data on diabetes and cardiovascular diseases shows that "previously healthy people" who caught Covid-19 have a 2.7 times higher likelihood of diabetes diagnosis within 12 months of recovering from the virus, and the risk of the onset of cardiac problems was 1.5 times higher among Covid-19 survivors and 3.5 times higher in the hospitalised group.

Meanwhile the Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said Covid-19 is still regarded as a public health emergency of international concern, its highest form of an alert.

COVID WHO downgrades Covid-19 pandemic

BBC News reported on 5 May that the World Health Organization WHO was downgrading COVID-19 and no longer characterising it as a global health emergency.

The UN health agency first declared the coronavirus to be an international crisis on Jan. 30, 2020.

WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced the change during a media briefing held with reporters at the agency's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. But he clarified that this does not mean the pandemic is over.

Covid-19 remains a threat

"Even though the global Covid-19 crisis has officially ended after more than three years, the virus is still causing deaths every four minutes," reported *Bloomberg* (25 May 2023).

"The virus that has caused at least 20-m deaths globally continues to mutate, leaving the elderly and those with underlying health conditions vulnerable to unpredictable medical accessibility, scant protection from others who are not wearing masks or recently vaccinated, and largely reliant on chance.

"While some companies like Moderna and Pfizer continue to update their vaccines and try to make them easier to produce and store, many innovative approaches conceived at the outset have been abandoned."

Covid led to highest mortality rate

Discovery Health Medical Scheme (DHMS) has reported that Covid-19 was the primary cause of death among its members in 2021, resulting in the highest mortality rate it has ever documented, reported *Business Day* (2 June 2023).

The age- and gender-standardised mortality rates peaked in DHMS's history in 2021, rising to

767 per 100 000 life-years from 542 the previous year. This surge contrasts starkly with the decade-long trend of decreasing mortality rates before the pandemic, noted Shirley Collie, Discovery Health's chief research actuary.