

Research Article

Neurological Manifestations of Patients Infected with COVID-19: A Systematic Review

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Abbreviations

ACE2: Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme-2; CNS: Central Nervous System; COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019; PCR: Polymerase Chain Reaction; PNS: Peripheral Nervous System; PRISMA: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses; SARS-CoV-2: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2; TNF: Tumor Necrosis Factor; WHO: World Health Organization.

Introduction

In December 2019, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was reported for the first time in Wuhan, China, and then spread rapidly out to the rest of the world [1]. The COVID-19 outbreak has been announced a pandemic by the World Health Organization. The major clinical symptoms of COVID-19 are associated with respiratory and cardiovascular systems. The most accepted hypothesis for the pathogenesis of SARS-CoV-2 is the interaction between Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme-2 (ACE2) receptor and SARS-CoV-2 [2,3]. SARS-CoV-2 can infect and destroy host target cells through the ACE2 receptor. ACE2 receptor expresses

Abstract

In the light of the recent evidence, neurological manifestations have been reported in patients infected with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). To shed light on a clear-cut explanation of neurological complications followed by SARS-CoV-2, a systematic analysis was reviewed. To this point, general medical databases, such as PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar from January 1, 2020, to September 20, 2020, were systematically searched to find related published articles. Through the search strategy, 93 studies for qualitative synthesis were included. Finally, the available data of 8,753 hospitalized patients with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) showed that the most prevalent Central Nervous System (CNS) manifestations of COVID-19 were headache (1137 cases, 18%) and dizziness (142 cases, 2%). On the other hand, some peripheral nervous system (PNS) symptoms were muscle pain (3300 cases, 53%), hypogeusia (646 cases, 11%), anosmia (545 cases, 9%), and hyposmia (379 cases, 6%). Furthermore, a small proportion of patients had ageusia (74 cases, 1%), cerebrovascular disorders (66 cases, 0.75%), and impaired consciousness (21 cases, 0.2%). Besides, some neurological features, such as encephalitis, neuralgia, ataxia, Guillain-Barre syndrome, miller fisher syndrome, intracerebral hemorrhage, polyneuritis cranialis, and dystonic posture were reported in the literature as case reports and case series.

Conclusion: Taken together, data from our systematic analysis indicated that neurological manifestations in both CNS and PNS were reported in COVID-19 patients. Further observational research in this field with more participants are needed to detect the specific risk concerning neurological complications in COVID-19 infection.

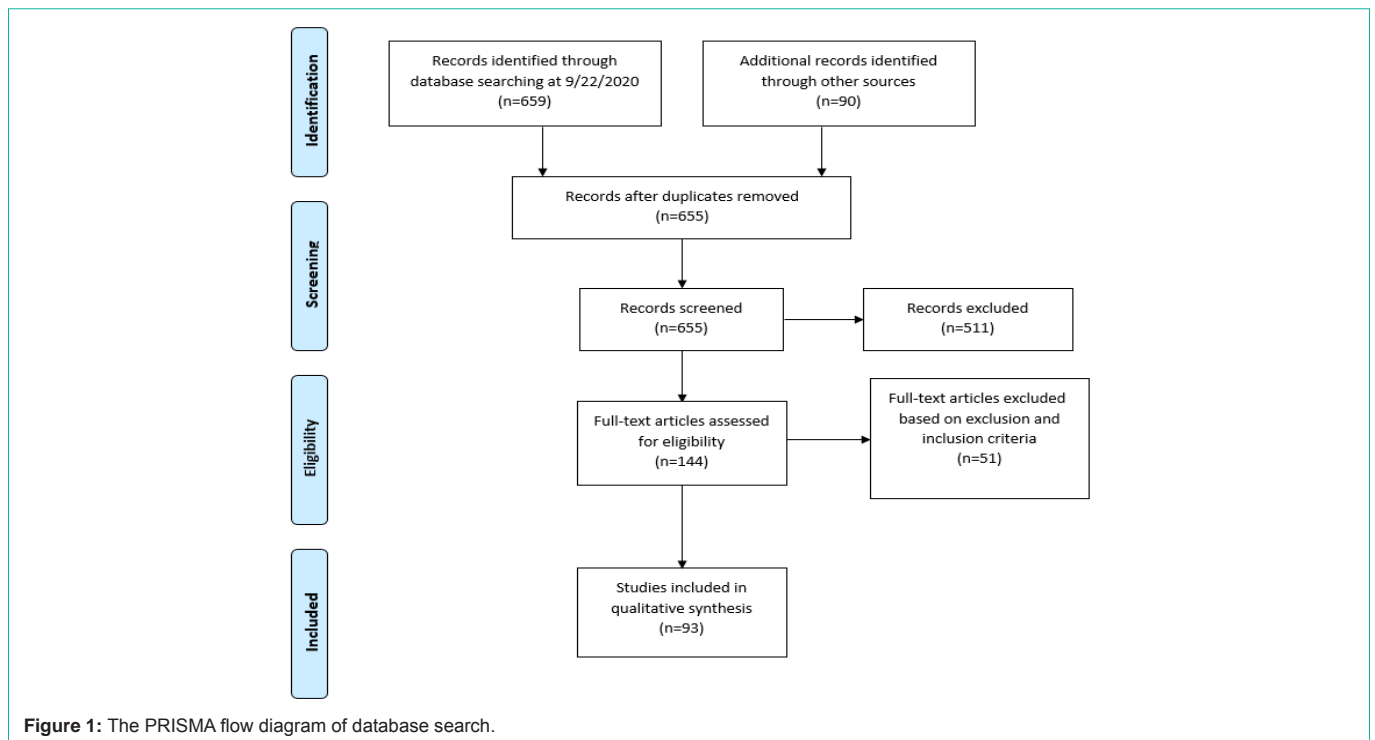
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on the surface of many types of human cells, such as the lungs, heart, gut, and brain [4,5]. Regard to this pathogenesis, it has been suggested that ACE2 acts as the main host receptor for the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the CNS and facilitates its neuroinvasion [6]. On the other hand, clinical observational studies have been reported that about 36% of COVID-19 patients have neurological symptoms [7,8]. Determination of neurological complications followed by SARS-CoV-2 infection is necessary because CNS viral infections may cause long-lasting brain injury [3]. Therefore, conducting systematic reviews on neurological manifestations infected with SARS-CoV-2 can guide neuroscientists to find risk factors and help physicians to manage the treatment of COVID-19 patients. In this systematic review, we comprehensively reported various neurological manifestations in COVID-19 patients.

Methods

Search strategy

This systematic review was administered on papers published from January 1, 2020, to September 20, 2020, in regular databases including PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar. We searched the combination of keywords related to neurological diseases, neurological manifestations, CNS and PNS symptoms, and COVID-19 that were used with Boolean operators for more efficient literature retrieval



(Supplementary 1).

To assure the validity and accuracy of our study, we investigated the reference list for each selected article to recognize possible missing articles. We expanded our search manually to recognize additional related articles. No language limitations were imposed. The search terms used in this study were Nervous System, Central Nervous System Diseases, Neurologic Signs and Symptoms, Brain Disorders, Headache, Anosmia, Neurologic Manifestations, Cerebrovascular Disease, Coronavirus, COVID-19, and SARS-CoV-2.

Study selection

The searching was performed by three authors (M.S.G, N.KH, and N.J). Duplication results were removed by the EndNote (X8 software). Additional investigators independently screened studies for the inclusion criteria. Our systematic review was assessed according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) checklist.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria and study selection

We included original studies (e.g. Case-Control, Cross-Sectional, Cohort, Case-Series, and Case Report) that reported neurological manifestations in COVID-19 patients, which confirmed with World Health Organization (WHO) interim guidance [9] and polymerase chain reaction (PCR). We excluded all letters, comments, review articles, and communications. We also excluded studies that did not report a reliable test for confirmation of SARS-CoV-2.

Data extraction

The extraction table contains information as follows: databases, title, journal, hospital, first author, publication date, location, patient data, patient source, sample size, study type, age, gender, CNS symptoms (headache, dizziness, and impaired consciousness),

PNS symptoms (hypogeusia, anosmia, hyposmia, and myalgia), neurodegenerative diseases, and laboratory brain test. All investigators extracted the data from selected articles. Any possible disagreement was resolved by consensus.

Results

Literature search

The PRISMA flow diagram of database search was summarized in Figure 1. In the initial search, 749 reports were screened for the analysis of patients with COVID-19. Based on the PRISMA checklist, 94 articles were excluded because of duplication, 511 were excluded after the title and abstract screening, and the full text of 144 reports was reviewed, after that 51 full-text articles didn't meet inclusion criteria and were removed. Finally, 93 studies met the inclusion criteria (Figure 1).

Characteristics of included studies

The characteristics of the included studies are shown in Table 1. Studies extracted were case report (41, 44%), cross-sectional retrospective (28, 30%), case series (12, 13%), cohort (11, 12%), and case-control (1, 1.1%) (Table 1). All studies were published in 2020 and the majority of reports (41, 44% of studies) were from China. Finally, the available data of 8,753 hospitalized patients with COVID-19 infection were used for this systematic review. Three reports have not mentioned gender in the analysis of patients with COVID-19.

Neurological manifestations of COVID-19 patients

Overall, 8,753 confirmed patients with COVID-19 infection were included in the review, which showed that 4,329 patients (53%) were male. The most prevalent CNS symptoms were headache (1137 cases, 18%) and dizziness (142 cases, 2%) and the most prevalent PNS

Table 1: Characteristics of the studies and nervous symptoms included in the systematic review.

First Author	Study Type	Publication Date (MM/DD)	Location	Sample Size	Age: Mean±SD/ Median (IQR) (year)	Gender (Male/ Female)	Central Nervous System (CNS) Symptoms				Peripheral Nervous System (PNS) Symptoms					
							Dizziness	Headache	Impaired consciousness	Cerebrovascular diseases	Muscle ache or fatigue or myalgia	Smell disorders (including hyposmia)	Anosmia	Taste disorders (including hypogeusia)	Ageusia	
Gupta [22]	Retrospective observational case series	4/6	New dehli, India	21	40.3 (16-73 IQR)	14 / 7		3								
He [23]	Retrospective study	4/5	Wuhan, China	204	49 (34-62IQR)	79 / 125		14			66					
Huang [24]	Retrospective study	4/15	Wuhan, China	41	49 (41-58)	30 / 11		3			18					
Jin [25]	Retrospective study	3/17	Zhejiang, China	651	45.2	331 / 320		67			190					
Kong [26]	Retrospective study	2/21	South Korea	28	42.6 (20-73)	15/13		3			7					
Liu [27]	Retrospective study	2/7	Hubei Province, China	137	55±16	61/76		13			44					
Liu [28]	Retrospective cohort study	4/3	Wuhan, China	245	53.95±16.90	114/131	10	12			192					
Lu [29]	Retrospective study	4/10	Wuhan, China	141	49 (9- 87)	77 /64		11								
Qin [30]	Cohort study	3/12	Wuhan, China	452	58 (47-67)	235/217	37	52		11	310					
Tian [31]	Retrospective study	2/21	Beijing/Wuhan, China	262	47.5 (1-94)	127/135		17			69					
Yan [32]	Cross sectional	4/12	California, USA	59	48.5 (18-79)	29/29 Gender Diverse:1		39			85		40			42
Zhang [33]	Single center, retrospective, Observational study	4/1	Wuhan, China	120	45.4±15.6	43/77		28			57					
Beltrán Corbellini [34]	Cross sectional	4/22	Madrid, Spain	79	61.6±17.4	48/31						25	14	28		14
Bénézit [35]	Cross sectional	4/15	western France	259	Not mentioned	Not mentioned						51		63		
Chen [36]	Case series (single center retrospective observational study)	4/28	Taizhou, China	145	47.5±14.6	79/66	29	24			79					
Chen [37]	Case series	3/26	Wuhan, China	274	62.0 (44.0-70.0)	171/103	21	31		4	60					
Klopfenstein [38]	Cross sectional	4/17	Trévenans, France	114	Not mentioned	Not mentioned		44			133		54			
Lechien [39]	Cross sectional	4/18	France	78	40.6±11.2	32/46						11	24	53		
Lechien [40]	Cross sectional	4/6	Belgium Brussels Mons Baudour Ath France	417	36.9±11.4	154/263		188			242	73	284	342		
Wang [41]	Cohort	3/16	Wuhan, China	69	42.0 (35.062.0)	32/37	5	10			50					
Vaira [42]	Cross sectional	4/27	Sassari, Italy	72	49.2±13.7	27/45		30				44		39		
Lu [43]	Retrospective multicenter study cohort	4/18	Sichuan province, China	304	44 (33±59.25)	182/122				3						
Mao [1]	Retrospective, observational case series	4/10	Wuhan, China	214	52.7±15.5	87/127	36	28	16	15	23	11		12		
Mi [44]	Retrospective case series	4/1	Wuhan, China	6	72.16	2/4	2				5					
Moein [45]	Case control	4/17	Tehran, Iran	60	46.55±12.17	40/20		22			5	44	15			14
Tostmann [46]	Cohort	4/23	Netherlands	90	39.5	19/71		64			57	37				
Li [47]	Cross sectional	2/23	Wuhan, China	31	54±13	15/16		8			32					
Liu [48]	Cross sectional	2/17	Jianghan, China	30	35±8	10/20		16			21					
Sun [49]	Cross sectional	4/15	Nanyang City	150	45±16	67/83				2	23					
Chen [50]	Case Series	1/29	Wuhan, China	99	55-5±13.1 (21-82)	67/32		8			11					
Ding [51]	Case series	3/20	Wuhan, China	5	50.20±9.83 (39 66)	2/3		2			4					
Du [52]	Prospective Cohort	4/8	Wuhan, China	179	57.6±13.7 (18-87)	97/82		17			105					
Escalera-Antezana [53]	Observational, retrospective and Cross sectional	3/27	Bolivia, South American	12	39 (25-43)	6/6					5					
Gilani [54]	Case series	4/23	Tehran, Iran	5	39 (35-44)	3-Feb					1		5			
Wang [55]	Retrospective	3/2	China	31	7 (0.5-17)	15/16		3			3					
Wang [56]	Retrospective	4/9	Wuhan, China	57	40 (33-49)	25/32		7		1	40					
Xu [57]	Retrospective case series	4/14	Zhejiang province, China	62	41 (32-52)	36 /27		21			32					

Yan [32]	Retrospective cohort study	4/24	San Diego, USA	128	admitted 53.5 (40-65) outpatient 43.0 (34-54)	61/67		62		90		75	70
Yan [58]	Single center, retrospective, observational	4/27	Wuhan, China	193	64 (49-73)	114/79		21	8	101			
Zhang [59]	Case series	4/2	Wuhan, China	5	45±11	4/1				3			
Zhang [60]	Retrospective	3/20	Zhejiang, China	645	Normal imaging 34.90±14.20 Abnormal imaging 46.65±13.82	328/317		67		189			
Zheng [61]	Retrospective, single center case series	4/10	Chengdu, China	99	49.4±18.45 (0.25-87.00)	51/48		12		72			
Zhang [62]	Retrospective cohort study	3/26	Wuhan, China	28	65.0 (56.0-70.0)	17/11			15	22			
Monti [63]	Case series	4/2	Pavia, Italy	4	58±5	4 Female		2		4	3	3	
Guan [64]	Cohort	28-Feb	Guangzhou, Wuhan, China	1099	47.0 (35.0-58.0)	637/459		150	7	583			
Zhou [65]	Cohort	4/3	Wuhan, China	191	56-0 (46-0-67-0)	119/72				73			
Wu [66]	Cohort	3/13	Wuhan, China	201	51 (43-60)	128/73				65			
Mo [67]	Case series	3/17	Wuhan, China	155	54 (42-66)	86/69	2	8		110			
Hintschich [68]	Prospective	7/1	Regensburg, Germany	41	37	12/29					25	18	
Coppola [69]	Observational Prospective Study	9/11	Milanese, Italy*	73	69.75	52/21							
Klok [70]	Retrospective Cohort Study	4/10	Leiden, the Netherlands	184	64 (12)	139/45							
Oxley [71]	Case report	4/28	New York, united states	5	40.4	4/1		4		5	22		8
Helms [72]	Observational, Retrospective	6/4	Strasbourg, France	58	63	Not mentioned							
Garg [73]	Observational Study	8/14	Madhya Pradesh, India	391	49.07±15.74	241/150		24			35	8	26
Camdessanche [21]	Case Report	7/12	Saint Etienne, France	1	64	Male							
Jang [74]	Case Report	7/12	Seoul, Korea	1	42	Male				1		1	1
Ollarves Carrero [75]	Case Report	4/7	Madrid, Spain	1	40	Female		1		1		1	
Zhao [76]	Case Report	4/1	Shanghai, China	1	61	Male							
Moriguchi [11]	Case Report	3/25	Yamanashi, Japan	1	24	Male		1		1			
Sedaghat [77]	Case Report	4/11	Sari, Iran	1	65	Male							
ElOtmami [78]	Case Report	4/20	Casablanca, Morocco	1	70	Female							
Huang [79]	Case Report	5/6	Los Angeles, United States	1	40	Female							
Duong [80]	Case Report	4/17	Los Angeles, United States	1	41	Female							
Ye [81]	Case Report	4/10	Wuhan, China	1		Male							
Yin [82]	Case Report	4/15	Wuhan, Hubei, China	1	64	Male							
Filatov [83]	Case Report	5/21	Boca Raton, United states	1	74	Male				1		1	1
Wong [84]	Case Report	4/7	Telford, UK	1	40	Male		1		1		1	
Virani [85]	Case Report	4/12	Pittsburgh, United states	1	54	Male							
Alberti [86]	Case Report	3/25	Milan, Italy	1	71	Male		1		1			
Scheidl [87]	Case Report	4/11	Selters, Germany	1	54	Female							
Ottaviani [88]	Case Report	5/12	Trento, Italy	1	66	Female							
Abdelnour [89]	Case Report	4/27	Northern Ireland, United Kingdom	1	69	Male							
Caamaño DS [90]	Case Report	5/14	Madrid, Spain	1	61	Male							
Wei [91]	Case Report	2/26	Wuhan, China	1	62	Male							
Jin [92]	Case Report	6/21	Wuhan, China	1	61	Female							
Suwanwongse [93]	Case Report	4/6	New York City, USA	1	88	Male							
Vollono [94]	Case Report	4/21	Rome, Italy	1	78	Female							
Sohal [95]	Case Report	5/1	NY, United States	1	72	Male							
Zanin [96]	Case Report	5/4	Brescia, Italy	1	54	Female							
Paniz-Mondolfi [97]	Case Report	4/21	New York, united states	1	74	Male							

González-Pinto [98]	Case Report	4/30	Bilbao, Spain	1	36	Female											
Zhou [99]	Case Report	4/22	Xi'an, China	1	75	Female											
Valderrama [100]	Case Report	5/12	New York, united states	1	52	Male											
Viguiet [101]	Case Report	5/4	Toulouse, France	1	66	Male											
Hughes [102]	Case Report	4/29	Wales, UK	1	59	Male											
Shariff-Razavi [103]	Case Report	3/27	Sari, Iran	1	79	Male											
Toscao [104]	case report	4/17	Pavia, Italy	4	-	4 male					4	1	1			2	
Lapergue [105]	case report	4/1	Paris, France	6	51.8	2-Apr											
Zhao [106]	case report	3/18	Wuhan, China	1	66	Male					1						
Zhang [107]	case report	4/21	Wuhan, China	1	40	Female	1				1						
Gutierrez Ortiz [108]	case report	4/17	Madrid, Spain	2	50, 39	2 Male	1										2
Padroni [109]	case report	4/24	Italy	1	70	Female											
Poyiadi [110]	case report	3/31	Detroit, Michigan, United States	1	70	Female		1									
Gandolfini [111]	case report	4/14	Parma, Italy	2	75, 52	1/1											2
Total					8,753		4329/3991	142 (1.60%)	1137 (13.00%)	21 (0.20%)	66 (0.75%)	3300 (37.70%)	379 (4.30%)	545 (6.20%)	646 (7.40%)		

symptoms were muscle pain (e.g. ache, fatigue, and myalgia) (3300 cases, 53%), hypogeusia (646 cases, 11%), anosmia (545 cases, 9%), and hyposmia (379 cases, 6%) out of the 8,753 reviewed COVID-19 cases. A much smaller proportion of patients had ageusia (74 cases, 1%), cerebrovascular diseases (66 cases, 0.75%), and impaired consciousness (21 cases, 0.2%) out of 8,753 reviewed COVID-19 cases (Figure 2).

Discussion

In our systematic review, we showed that the majority of COVID-19 patients have experience in CNS manifestations, including headache and dizziness. Also, common PNS symptoms indicated from our systematic review include muscle pain, hypogeusia, anosmia, and hyposmia. The neurological complication followed by the SARS-COV-2 infection is a critical concern because this viral infection can cause long-lasting brain injury. To date, several studies reported neurological manifestations in COVID-19 patients [1,10,11]. This study confirms that neurological manifestations are associated with SARS-COV-2 infection. It is still unclear how SARS-COV-2 causes neurological complications [12]. It is thought that the SARS-COV-2 virus may enter into the CNS through different mechanisms, such as intranasal inoculation, infected monocytes, interaction with ACE2 receptors on brain endothelial cells, and trans-synaptic transmission [13]. Explanation of the neuroinvasive potential of SARS-COV-2 needs more evidence. However, conducting a systematic analysis of observational studies can get us a precious clue to find out the correlation between neurological symptoms and SARS-COV-2. To this point, we comprehensively reviewed 93 studies with 8,753 cases. In comparison with previous studies, more articles and patients were included and analyzed in the current study [14,15]. In agreement with previous studies, neurological symptoms revealed from our systematic review include headache, dizziness, hyposmia, and hypogeusia [14,16]. Little is known regarding the pathophysiology of headache in COVID-19 patients. A possible explanation for this might be that cytokine and chemokine production significantly increased by macrophages during the disease [12]. Furthermore, the increase of serum pro-inflammatory cytokines has been suggested for inducing

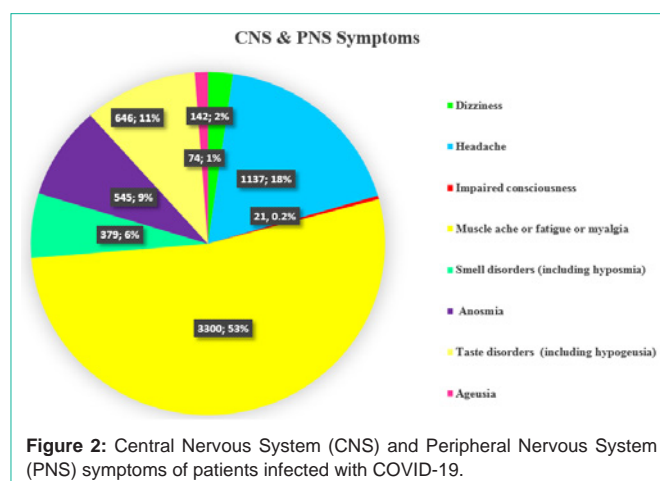


Figure 2: Central Nervous System (CNS) and Peripheral Nervous System (PNS) symptoms of patients infected with COVID-19.

muscle ache, fatigue, and myalgia in COVID-19 patients, which are the most frequently reported PNS manifestations according to our review [1]. Due to the inflammatory mechanism of this virus, there are some other possible disabilities and diseases which can occur during the infection [17-19]. Epilepsy and seizures may occur through Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF) release and glutamate receptor activation [20]. Some other problems like Guillain-Barre syndrome, meningitis, and encephalitis have also been reported in some cases [21,11].

Conclusion

To summarize, broad-spectrum of neurological manifestations in both CNS and PNS have been reported. Among these, headache and dizziness are of the top in CNS symptoms and muscle ache, fatigue, and myalgia are the most prevalent in PNS problems. However, some possible pathophysiology of these complications has been suggested, the exact mechanism of the SARS-COV-2 neuroinvasion is not fully understood. Further observational research in this field with more participants would be helpful in the detection of neurological manifestations followed by SARS-COV-2 infection.

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Availability of Data and Materials

All data and materials are available from the corresponding authors upon request.

Author Contributions

N.J, N.K, and M.S.G performed search strategy, data extraction, and drew the preliminary tables. S.Y and A.S contributed to the interpretation of the results. E.S and V.H contributed to the analysis of the results. S.S.N conceived of the presented idea and took the lead in writing the manuscript. All authors provided critical feedback and helped shape the research, analysis and manuscript.

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