

Disturbing hallucinations and psychosis mysteriously plague some coronavirus patients

Nightmarish visions... plagued [Kim] Victory during her hospitalization this spring for severe respiratory failure caused by the coronavirus. They made her so agitated that one night, she pulled out her ventilator breathing tube.

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Reports from hospitals and researchers suggest that about [two-thirds](#) to [three-quarters](#) of coronavirus patients in I.C.U.'s have experienced it in various ways. Some have "hyperactive delirium," paranoid hallucinations and agitation; some have "hypoactive delirium," internalized visions and confusion that cause patients to become withdrawn and incommunicative; and some have both.

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The ingredients for delirium are pervasive during the pandemic. They include long stints on ventilators, heavy sedatives and poor sleep. Other factors: patients are mostly immobile, occasionally restrained to keep them from accidentally disconnecting tubes, and receive minimal social interaction because families can't visit and medical providers wear face-obscuring protective gear and spend limited time in patients' rooms.

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Two months after returning home from her three-week hospitalization, Ms. Victory said she's been experiencing troubling emotional and psychological symptoms, including depression and insomnia. She has been noticing the smell of cigarettes or wood burning, a figment of her imagination... "People think when the patient got well and out of the hospital, it will be OK, it's over," Ms. Victory said. "I worry if the virus didn't kill me back then, would that have affected my body enough to kill me now?"

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