

Even mild cases of COVID can provide immunity

To date, there is limited evidence of reinfection in humans with previously documented COVID-19... Most studies of immune protection against SARS-CoV-2 in humans have focused on the induction of neutralizing antibodies. But antibody responses tend to wane and are not detectable in all patients, especially those with less severe forms of COVID-19. “It will therefore be critical in light of the ongoing pandemic to determine if people with milder forms of COVID-19 develop robust immunity against SARS-CoV-2,” [the authors] commented.

...

To address this gap in knowledge, [researcher Marcus] Buggert and his collaborators assessed SARS-CoV-2-specific T cell and antibody responses in more than 200 individuals from Sweden across the full spectrum of exposure, infection, and disease. “... we used a systematic approach to map cellular and humoral immune responses against SARS-CoV-2 in patients with acute moderate or severe COVID-19, individuals in the convalescent phase after mild or severe COVID-19, exposed family members, and healthy individuals who donated blood before (2019) or during the pandemic (2020),” they wrote.

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“Our findings suggest that the reliance on antibody responses may underestimate the extent of population-level immunity against SARS-CoV-2,” Buggert says. “The obvious next step is to determine whether robust memory T cell responses in the absence of detectable antibodies can protect against COVID-19 in the long term.”

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