

Loss of smell is a common symptom of Alzheimer's, not just COVID. Do these diseases share cognitive symptoms too?

One of the stranger symptoms of Covid — the [loss of the sense of smell](#) — is a symptom that, well before the pandemic, was considered to be a warning sign for dementia.

The big question for researchers now is whether Covid-related loss of smell might also be associated with cognitive decline. Around [5 percent of Covid patients worldwide](#) — some 27 million people — have reported loss of smell lasting more than six months.

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“Our data strongly suggest that adults over 60 years of age are more vulnerable to cognitive impairment post-Covid if they had a smell dysfunction, regardless of the severity of the Covid,” said study co-author Gabriela Gonzalez-Aleman, a professor at Pontificia Universidad Catolica Argentina in Buenos Aires, adding that it's too soon to tell if the cognitive impairment is permanent.

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According to Jonas Olofsson, a professor of psychology at the University of Stockholm who studies the link between [sense of smell and dementia risk](#) — and was not involved in the new research, smell loss is a well-established precursor of cognitive decline. It's also well established that Covid can lead to lasting loss of smell, he said.

“The question is whether those two lines of research intersect,” Olofsson said. “This study is quite tantalizing, although the information that I have seen so far does not allow for any strong conclusions. ”

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