# **Nirmatrelvir and Molnupiravir and Post–COVID-19 Condition in Older Patients**



Although some may argue that the COVID-19 pandemic is winding down, it is still impacting millions across the globe who are experiencing long covid (also termed post-covid condition or PCC). In addition, there are currently no US Food and Drug Administration approved medications for treating or preventing long covid. There are, however, antiviral medications recommended for treating patients with acute COVID-19 infections who are at risk for severe disease. Two of these medications include nirmatrelvir and molnupiravir. One recent study (largely consisting of US male veterans) suggested that taking these medications reduced the risk of developing long-term symptoms of COVID-19. As a result of this information, a cohort study of these two medications was conducted to examine the role these medications may play in preventing long covid.

For the cohort study, selected patients were Medicare enrollees aged 65 or older who were diagnosed with COVID-19 between January and September 2022. COVID-19 diagnosis was determined based upon patients with International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modification code of U07.1. Additionally, patients who were prescribed nirmatrelvir or molnupiravir were also assumed to have a COVID-19 diagnosis, as there are no other indications for these medications. Long covid was identified according to World Health Organization (WHO) criteria and any occurrence of these symptoms (not present before COVID-19 infection) between 4 and 12 weeks of infection was defined as long covid.

Ultimately, 3,975,690 patients were examined with 57% of these patients fitting criteria to be included in the cohort study. Among included patients, 19.5% received nirmatrelvir and 2.6% received molnupiravir. Incidence of long covid symptoms among patients receiving nirmatrelvir was 11.8%, 13.7% for molnupiravir, and 14.5% for patients not receiving either medication. In addition, absolute risk reduction was 2.7% for nirmatrelvir and 0.8% for molnupiravir. Although this translates to only a small reduction in long covid incidence, it is promising to see a potential new way to help prevent long covid in older patients.

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