**Did You Know? A study in U.K. disclosed that:**

**People who catch Covid are five times more likely to die for up to 18 months.**

**By Stephen Beech, Sophie Collins, 19 JAN 2023**

A study has suggested that people who catch Covid are at much greater risk of dying for at least 18 months after being infected.

Aside from this alarming claim, researchers also found the virus is linked with higher risks of a heart attack and stroke in both the short and long-term.

The study involved more than 150,000 British participants and showed that the likelihood of Covid-19 patients dying, compared to uninfected people, was up to 81 times higher in the first three weeks of infection.

The findings also show that the chances of death remained five times higher up to 18 months later.

Professor Ian Wong, of the University of Hong Kong, author of this particular study said: “Covid-19 patients were more likely to develop numerous cardiovascular conditions compared to uninfected participants, which may have contributed to their higher risks of death.

“The findings indicate that patients with Covid-19 should be monitored for at least a year after recovering from the acute illness to diagnose cardiovascular complications of the infection, which form part of long Covid”.

The study compared the occurrence of cardiovascular conditions and death in infected compared to uninfected people - who were recruited before December 2020, when no vaccines were available in the UK.

More than 7,500 British patients with Covid-19 infection diagnosed from March 16, 2020, to November 30, 2020, were identified.

HSE's Dr Colm Henry says public compliance with Covid masks has 'waned' amid new 'more transmissible strain.’

Each patient was matched with up to 10 people who did not have Covid during the study period from March 2020 to the end of August 2021 and a group from before the pandemic.

Each uninfected group had more than 70,000 participants who were similar to the Covid-19 group for factors including age, sex, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular and other health conditions, body mass index (BMI) and ethnicity.

In all three groups, the average age was 66 and there were nearly equal numbers of men and women. Prof Wong said: “The historical control cohort was included to rule out the effect of routine healthcare services being reduced or cancelled during the pandemic, which led to worsening health and increased mortality even in uninfected people.”

Figures were obtained from medical and death records for outcomes including major cardiovascular disease - a combination of heart failure, stroke and coronary heart disease; numerous cardiovascular conditions such as stroke, irregular heartbeat and a heart attack; death from cardiovascular disease; and all-cause death.

Links were evaluated for the acute phase - within 21 days of Covid-19 diagnosis - and the post-acute phase, starting at 22 days after diagnosis and continuing for 18 months.

Compared with the two uninfected groups, patients with Covid-19 were around four times more likely to develop major cardiovascular disease in the acute phase and 40 per cent more likely in the post-acute phase.

Compared to uninfected people, the risk of death in Covid patients was up to 81-fold higher in the acute phase and five-fold higher in the post-acute phase. Patients with severe Covid were more likely to develop major cardiovascular disease or die than non-severe cases.

Covid-19 patients also had a greater likelihood of several cardiovascular conditions - including a heart attack and deep vein thrombosis - compared with uninfected participants in both the short- and long-term.

There were also some cardiovascular issues – for example stroke and irregular heartbeat – were elevated in Covid patients in the short-term, but then returned to normal levels.

Professor Wong added: “This study was conducted during the first wave of the pandemic, and future research should evaluate subsequent outbreaks.

“Previous research has indicated that Covid-19 vaccination may prevent complications, and further studies are needed to investigate its effectiveness in reducing the risks of cardiovascular disease and death after Covid-19 infection in patients with Covid-19 vaccination compared to those without vaccination”.

The findings were published in Cardiovascular Research, a journal of the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) ESC spokesperson Professor Héctor Bueno, of the National Centre for Cardiovascular Research (CNIC) in Spain, commented on the findings, saying: “Covid-19 has had a huge impact on patients with cardiovascular disease, who were less likely to receive optimal care during the pandemic and more likely to die from the infection.

"This study shows that Covid-19 also increases the risk of having cardiovascular complications and dying in the first weeks after the infection and remains high for months, suggesting that specific cardiovascular monitoring may be appropriate in these patients.”