

There is followup care available for people who tested positive at Sunnybrook hospital, either as a patient, or at the emergency room, or assessment centre. A team has followed over 450 people, starting right after a man who had travelled to Wuhan, China arrived at the hospital as Canada's first documented case of the novel coronavirus in January.

While "well over 90 per cent never came into hospital," and the majority are fine after two weeks, everyone is offered a followup appointment at three months.

"One reassuring thing is that most people declined coming in because they're already feeling back to health," said Dr. Nick Daneman, an infectious disease physician at Sunnybrook.

"People should know that the majority of people recover with no lingering symptoms."

He notes there's not a lot of data on long-term patients, and those who were never hospitalized. The team hopes to eventually share data on this and other trends.

A [July survey published in the U.S. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) of 292 people who had tested positive for COVID-19 but were never hospitalized, found 35 per cent were still feeling lingering symptoms weeks later. Among 18-34-year-olds with no chronic medical conditions, one in five did not feel back to their normal selves.

And a research letter from a group of [Italian scientists](#) found that out of 179 patients who had recovered from COVID, 87 per cent reported at least one persistent symptom, particularly fatigue and shortness of breath, weeks later.

But it's not clear how many are suffering in Canada, which has seen almost 127,000 COVID-19 cases nationwide, as they are not tracked in daily case counts either provincially or federally.

That's something Chandra Pasma, a 40-year-old whose entire family of five considers themselves long-haulers, would like to see Canada start doing.

"How do you know it's not an issue when people were told to stay home and not seek medical care and then there's no attempt to be systematic or survey?" she said over the phone from Ottawa.

"You literally have no idea. You're flying blind."

She wants an "official acknowledgment" from a chief medical officer of health or health minister of the people like herself and an update to the public health guidelines to include long-haulers.

"We're still being told it's an illness where a tiny minority of people get sick and die and the rest recover in two weeks," she said.

"I think it might change people's risk analysis if they understand that previously healthy young people are still sick five months out."

This would also help validate their experiences so that they're not left to "argue" with their doctors over symptoms.