

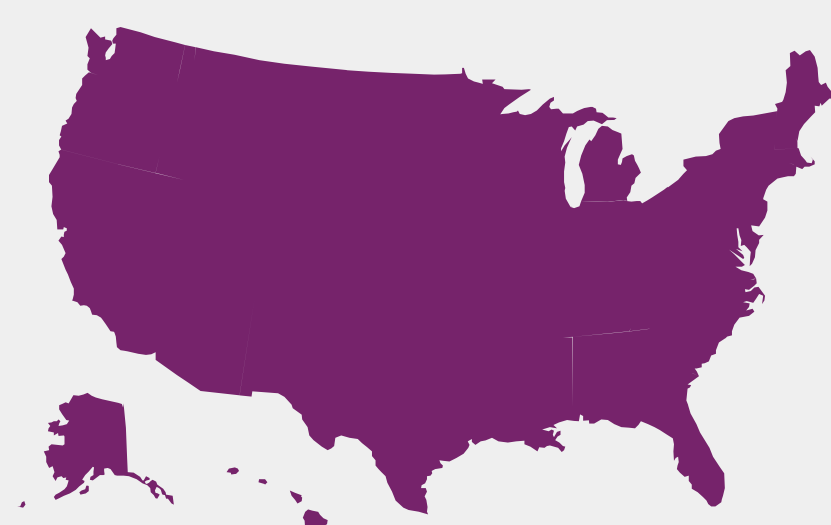
Prevalence and characteristics of long COVID and ‘long Flu’ in elderly patients

The incidence of post-COVID syndrome or “long COVID” in the elderly varies widely because of differences in definition and measurement method, and is likely to be underreported

Symptoms that satisfy the diagnostic criteria for long COVID may also be seen after an influenza infection, a condition the authors call “long Flu”

STUDY AIM:

To compare the incidence, symptomatology, and healthcare utilization between long COVID and long Flu elderly patients who are Medicare beneficiaries in the US



STUDY METHODS:

This was a cohort study of Medicare beneficiaries aged > 65 years in the US

ICD-10-CM codes were used to capture COVID-19, influenza, and residual symptoms



Long COVID was identified using a code-based or symptom-based definition, from 1–3 months post-infection

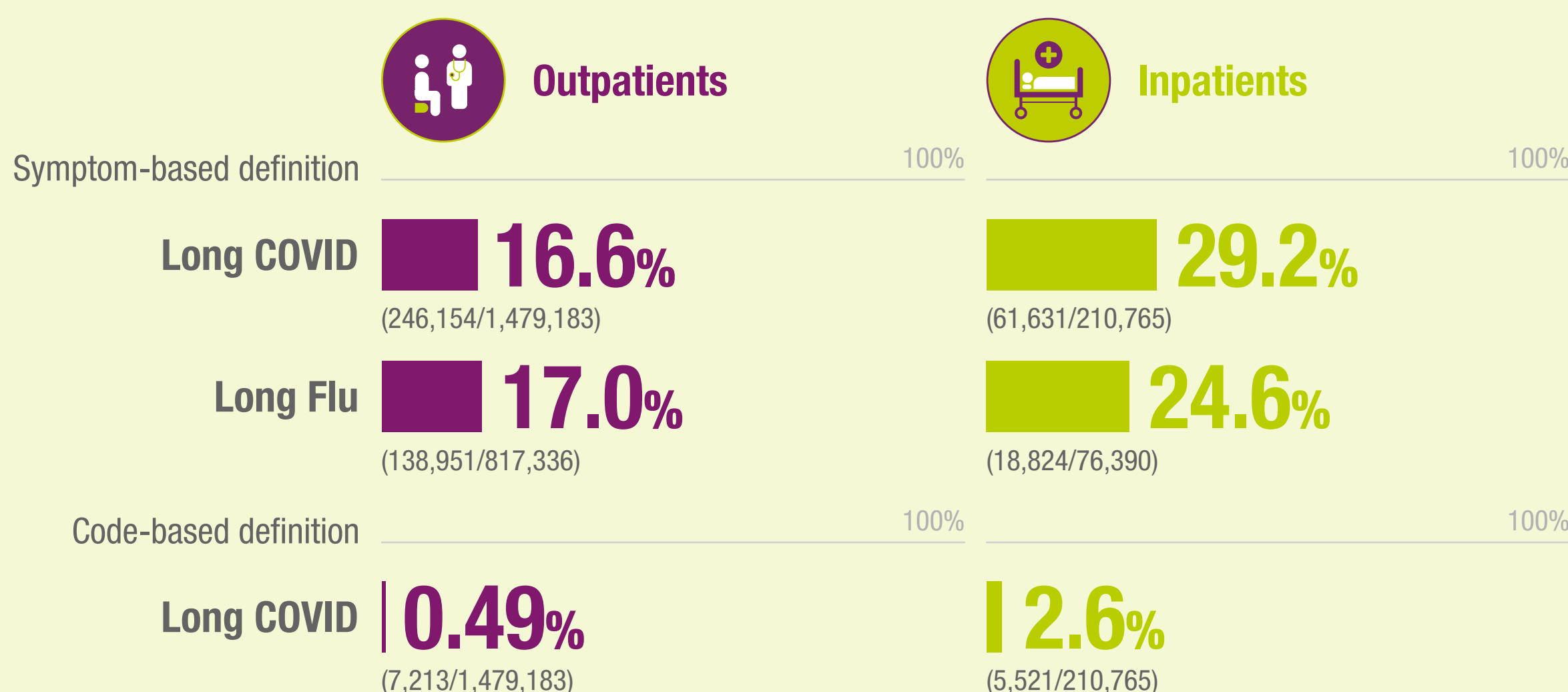
Long Flu was identified in influenza patients from the 2018 and 2019 flu seasons by the same symptom-based definition for long COVID



RESULTS:

Study included **2,071,532 COVID-19** patients diagnosed between April 2020 and June 2021 and **933,877 influenza** patients diagnosed in the 2018 and 2019 flu seasons

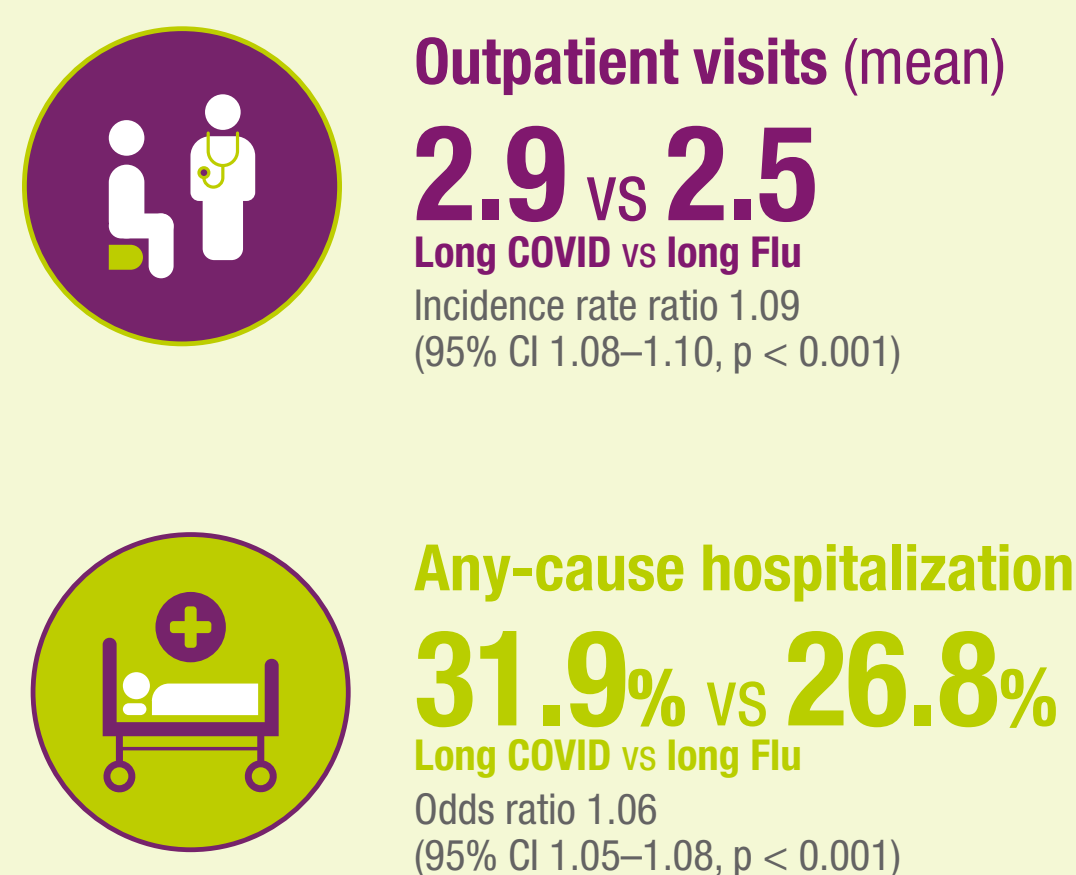
Percentage of patients diagnosed with long COVID or long Flu using symptom-based or code-based methods



The symptomatology of long COVID and long Flu differed. **Long Flu** patients had a higher incidence of:

- Cough
- Chest pain
- Headache
- Muscle/joint pain

Both **Long COVID** and **long Flu** outpatients demonstrated significant healthcare utilization.



The use of long COVID diagnostic codes alone is likely to result in gross underreporting of long COVID in the elderly population

The proportions of patients experiencing long COVID after COVID and ‘long Flu’ after a bout of influenza were similar, but there were notable differences in symptomatology. The impact of long COVID on healthcare utilization during the pandemic was higher than the impact of long-Flu pre-pandemic

To read more go to:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37068113/>