

Local Researchers Ask: Can fluvoxamine improve Long COVID Brain Fog?

Researchers led by Dr. Eric Lenze, director of the Healthy Mind Lab at Washington University School of Medicine, are running a clinical trial of the drug fluvoxamine. They hope fluvoxamine will help those struggling with Long COVID brain fog, memory, attention, and concentration problems.

“We think fluvoxamine may help many patients suffering from long COVID’s symptoms, such as brain fog and fatigue.”

-Dr. Eric Lenze, director of the Healthy Mind Lab at Washington University School of Medicine

Fluvoxamine is a safe and inexpensive medication that has been used since the 1990’s to help people with anxiety and depression. Fluvoxamine was also studied to treat COVID-19 infection and showed promising results early on. Researchers think that it may also help improve Long COVID brain fog. New research shows reduced levels of serotonin may be behind Long COVID brain fog^{1,2}. Fluvoxamine may reduce inflammation and boost levels of serotonin, a body chemical important for things like memory, mood, and sleep.

The study is taking place here in St. Louis at Washington University School of Medicine and is currently accepting participants. You may be eligible to join if you are 25 years old or older, you had COVID-29 at least 3 months ago, and you continue to have problems with memory, attention, or concentration. During the 22-week study participants will be given fluvoxamine or a placebo (a sugar or dummy pill), answer questions about their symptoms and

complete two visits with the study team. If you live outside of the St. Louis metro area, you may be able to participate remotely. Dr. Lenze wants people to know,

“The clinical trial is designed so that participants can participate from their homes; there are few (or even no) in-person study visits”.

-Dr. Eric Lenze, lead researcher of the fluvoxamine trial

Another plus of the study is everyone can eventually take the drug, even if you are assigned to take the placebo pill, you can receive fluvoxamine at the end of the study. The study team is working to make this trial a positive experience. Study participants will be provided up to \$100 for their time.

Interested? To see if you're eligible to join or for more information,

Contact Angie or Aris at 314-747-8906.

Email arisperez@wustl.edu or stevens.a@wustl.edu.

Or visit <https://redcap.link/LongCovid>

Sources:

1. Penn Medicine. (2023, October 16). *Penn study finds serotonin reduction causes long covid symptoms*. [News release] <https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-releases/2023/october/penn-study-finds-serotonin-reduction-causes-long-covid-symptoms>
2. Van Beusekom, M. (2023, October 17). SARS-COV-2 persistence, low serotonin may cause long-COVID symptoms. Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy. <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/covid-19/sars-cov-2-persistence-low-serotonin-may-cause-long-covid-symptoms>