

The Role of IRF/ARU Care in a Pandemic Underscored



Study concludes that “the role of medical rehabilitation in pandemics is an integral component of comprehensive management.”

A study, *Role of Rehabilitation in Pandemics*, published in the April 9, 2020 edition of the *Journal of Rehabilitation Management*, investigated the non-respiratory presentations and complications of a COVID-19 patient where medical rehabilitation may prove vital to a complete recovery.

Specifically, the authors examined emerging reports from the most affected countries, as of March 31, including China, South Korea, Italy, and Spain. Data indicate that in addition to the most commonly attributed respiratory symptoms of this novel coronavirus, there are several clinical presentations that may be best addressed by medical rehabilitation. Several conditions that have been reported in COVID-19 patients that would benefit from rehabilitative interventions include, but are not limited to, cerebrovascular disease and related strokes, seizures, skeletal muscular injuries and neuromuscular illnesses.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is evolving on a daily basis, particularly in the United States, the study suggests that approximately 20% of recovering patients will require facility-based rehabilitative care. In order to best meet patient need and recovery, the study suggests that a fully integrated approach to care will render positive longer-term results.



“Early rehabilitation of the COVID-19 patients can enhance pulmonary, respiratory function, reduce complications, improve function, cognitive impairments and quality of life.”

Key Findings:

- Evidence and key findings support that during disasters, early involvement of rehabilitation reduces disability and improves clinical outcomes.
- The rehabilitation needs of COVID-19 survivors will vary in different settings over time, but medical rehabilitation is essential in all phases of pandemic management.
- The study concludes, in part, that: “As in any disaster, the role of medical rehabilitation in pandemics is an integral component of comprehensive management.”
- Another conclusion of the study: “Early rehabilitation of the COVID-19 patients can enhance pulmonary, respiratory function, reduce complications, improve function, cognitive impairments and quality of life.”