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## Long Covid: clinical perspectives from a multidisciplinary view

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- 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021
- Society of Occupational Medicine
- Dr Clare Rayner



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Covid-19 is a  
'multisystem'  
disorder (affects  
many parts of  
the body)

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- **Many have organ damage**
  - Blood vessel infection? "Endothelitis" (affects smallest blood vessels)
  - Unusual features: blood clotting  
oxygen desaturation

Theories for ongoing symptoms in 'Long Covid'  
Viral persistence (in some people)  
Inflammatory response

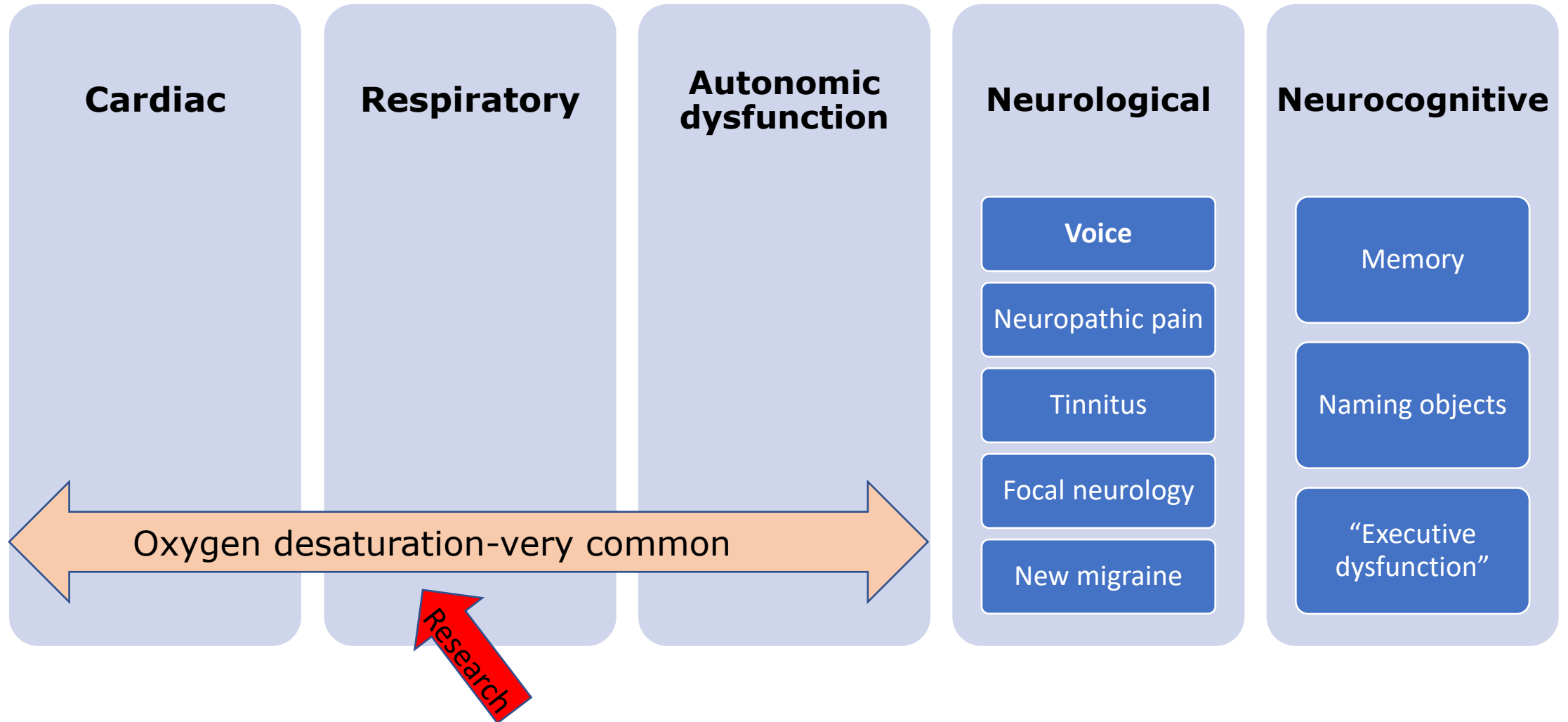


... Autoimmune conditions now being diagnosed

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**Message 1:** Many effects of this virus are **predictable** from what we know of other viruses. So **Long Covid is not quite the “mystery” that some suggest.**

Common body systems affected



2.

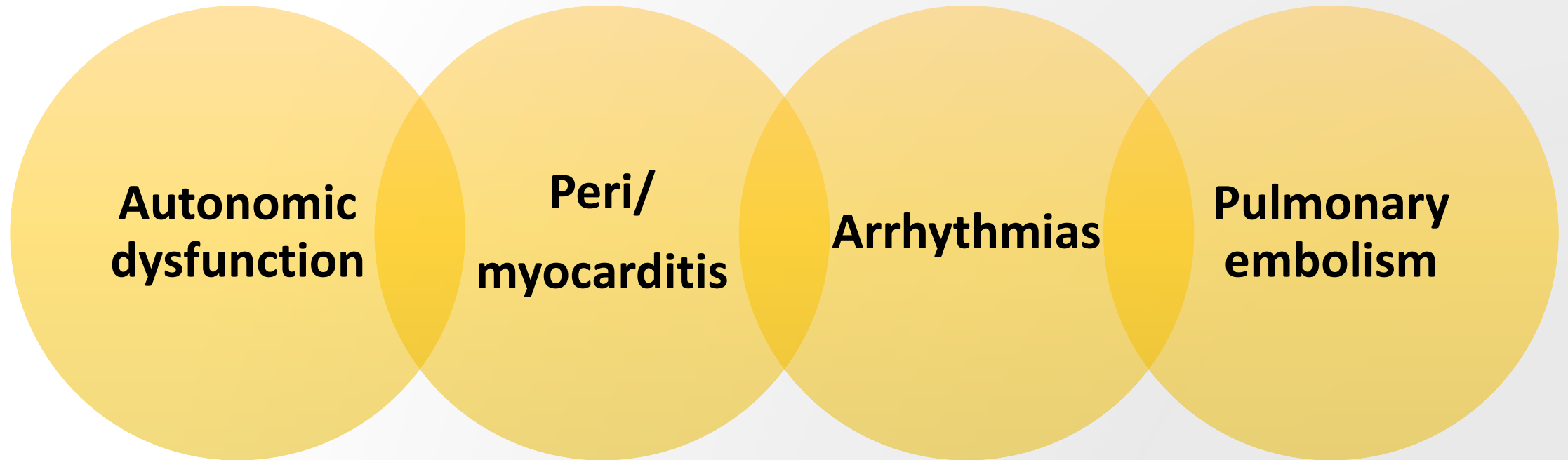
## **Medical assessment is essential**



 **Those at 12  
months need  
urgent help**

- Physical pathology is common + must be ruled out
  - Face-to-face
- Many people have not been medically assessed.
- Long Covid clinics-difficult to access
  - Most clinics offer telephone call + physiotherapy referral

# Assessment example: tachycardia (fast heart rate)



“When did anxiety become the commonest cause of tachycardia in a viral pandemic?”

Impact on  
function,  
incl. work

Neurocognitive

Postural  
Tachycardia  
Syndrome (PoTS)

Fatigue (not  
everyone)

Pain

Distress, lack of  
access to  
healthcare; not  
believed

***Relapses –***

- Relapsing–remitting course of illness. ‘Echoes’ initial illness & may be viral and/or inflammatory
- Some induced by exertion (brain or body)

Research

# Is there a predictable pattern in Long Covid?

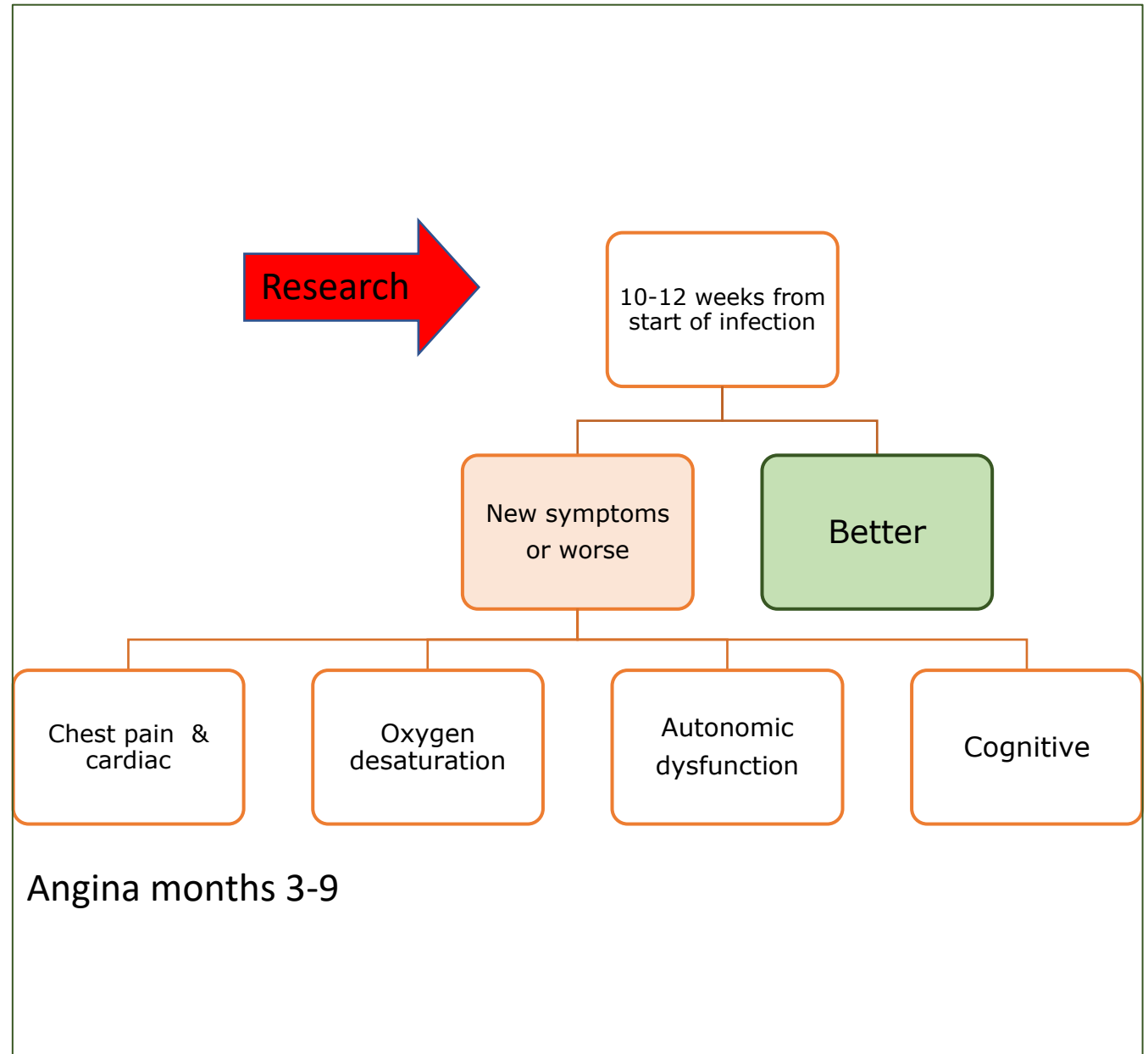
## Message 3:

**10-12 weeks**

**History: timeline**



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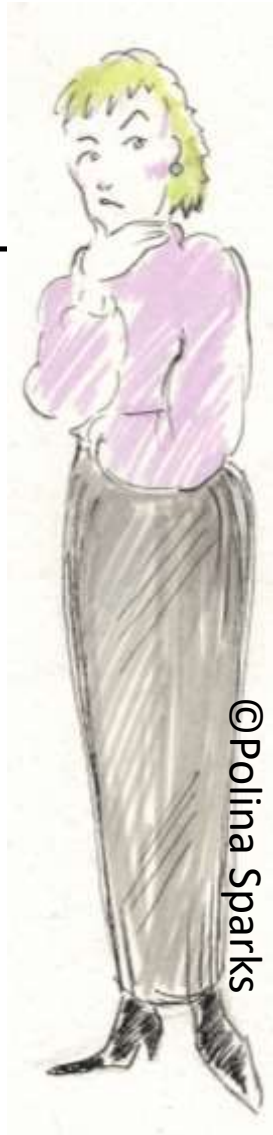


## Message 4:

**“Non-hospitalized”**

**≠**

**“mild”!**



“Those with mild illness who were not admitted to hospital”  
=error of thinking

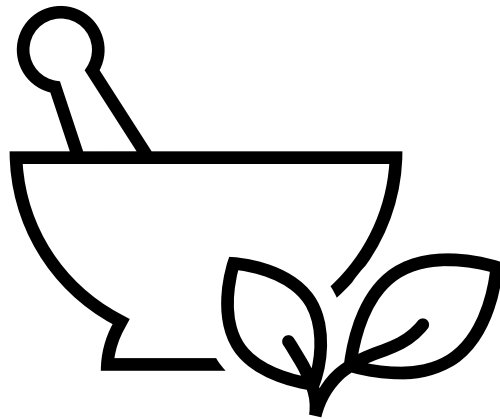
Take a history of acute phase  
“NO WONDER they are ill now!”

“Not hospitalised” = “not hospitalised”



# Message 5: Treatment is available + helps

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- Duty of care
  - Remembering 1°/2°/3° prevention
- Symptomatic treatment available
  - ✓ Inflammation
  - ✓ Cardiac (heart rate, angina)
  - ✓ Autonomic
  - ✓ Pain
  - ✓ Diet
- Improvement in function can be rapid
- *Early treatment: early recovery!*

**Physiotherapists/Occupational  
Therapists/Speech+Lang Therapists** invaluable  
expertise