Anosmia recognised as a symptom of COVID-19 infection

We are delighted that eight weeks after ENTUK and the British Rhinological Society issued a press release alerting physicians globally to the risk that patients presenting with isolated anosmia may be suffering with COVID-19 infection, it has been recognised by Public Health England and has been included in the list of symptoms used by NHS111. Patients with new-onset anosmia should be advised to self-isolate in order to reduce the risk of transmission, and we are hopeful that all members of the public developing anosmia will be able to access testing.

We estimate that many hundreds of thousands of patients in the UK have developed anosmia as a result of COVID-19. While loss of smell and taste may be short lived in the majority of cases, there will be significant numbers of patients with long-lasting symptoms. We will now focus our attention to supporting these patients, and primary care doctors and ENT specialists who will see a significant increase in demand for consultations. We have published evidence-based guidelines on the management of post-COVID anosmia, available on the ENT.uk website. We have also developed patient information, which will be updated as new evidence emerges.

We are proud to be partnering with AbScent and Fifth Sense to develop and provide additional support for patients who have lost their sense of smell through a number of different media. Fifth Sense and AbScent provide an invaluable service and we would strongly encourage all patients to visit their websites for further information.

We would not have achieved recognition of the importance of loss of sense of smell without the help from thousands of patients who have taken part in studies, and would like to thank all of them for their contribution. We would also encourage any patients who have not already done so to help with research into COVID-related loss of sense of smell by completing a short survey being undertaken by the UK arm of the Global Consortium for Chemosensory Research, run from the University of London.

Yours sincerely,

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